

Performing Politics:
Representation and Deliberation in the Public Sphere

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Author's Declaration

This thesis has been composed by myself, and is the product of my own work. This work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified.

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Abstract

The metaphor of politics-as-performance is commonly found in the political vernacular, from political 'actors' on the world 'stage' to the phenomenon of actors-turned-politicians. This interdisciplinary thesis comprises an extended exploration of the metaphor of politics-as-performance to generate a thick description of how political actors are represented in the visible public sphere. Performance theory has a strong heritage in other disciplines within social science, notably sociology (Goffman) and social anthropology (Turner), but has had more limited application in political science. Taking this limitation as a starting point, the thesis will argue that the metaphor of politics-as-performance is more than a banal turn of phrase. It can be a powerful analytical and theoretical tool in exploring the role, form and content of political information in a deliberative democracy. The thesis sets up and draws upon four UK-based case studies: the 2007 Blair-Brown premiership handover; the Scottish National Party's 2007 election campaign; the Faslane 365 nuclear blockade in 2006-2007; and the London '7/7' terrorist attack in 2005. These cases generate a thick description of the metaphor by combining ethnographic participant-observation and document analysis with the analytical tools and concepts of performance analysis such as staging, scripting and body work analysis.

The analysis of the empirical research highlights the complexity of the practice of political representation in an increasingly mediatised public sphere, as well as providing an experiential account of lived deliberation. In the case of the Blair-Brown handover, the thesis shows how the scripted characterisation and iterative rituals of national identity reinforce each political actor's representative authority. This is contrasted with the more playful, ludic performance of the Scottish National Party's election campaign

based on the 'presence' of key actors. The thesis also shows how unconventional political actors used more visceral and embodied performance techniques to gain visibility in the public sphere. The Faslane protestors, as well as incorporating devices such as humour and music into their performance, focus on transformations of their performing bodies and use themselves as representations of resistance. This theme of representing resistance is developed in the London terror attack case where the performance enforces violent transformations not only of the political actors' bodies and symbolically-resonant spaces but of the audience as well. The empirical cases thus provide a richly textured account of the techniques that both conventional and unconventional political actors use to insert themselves into the public sphere. In conclusion, the thesis offers a descriptive construction of the metaphor of politics-as-performance. This demonstrates its applicability to the political sphere and highlights the performative aspects of deliberation.

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List of Acronyms

BMP: Boase Massimi Pollitt

LibDems: Liberal Democrats

SNP: Scottish National Party

SNPtv: Scottish National Party television

PEB: Party Election Broadcast

PMQs: Prime Minister's Questions

PPB: Party Political Broadcast

PR: Public Relations

Chapter 1:

Setting the Scene for Politics-as-Performance

On the 20 January 2009, Barack Obama was sworn in as the 44th President of the United States in front of a 2 million-strong crowd at Washington's National Mall, an event remediated live on radio, television and computer screens throughout the world (CBSNews, 2009; BBCNews, 2009). It was a spectacular ceremony. After performances of poetry and music including an emotional rendition of "My Country 'tis of Thee" by Aretha Franklin and the infamously mimed classical music piece "Air and Simple Gifts", the cultural performances gave way to the business of politics that the crowds had gathered to see – the moment when the president elect would complete his transformation into the president proper by uttering the oath of office itself. There was an anticipatory hush as the audience waited to see the historic moment. However, all did not go according to plan. As he started to take the oath, Barack Obama, following an unfortunate slip-up from Chief Justice John Roberts, fluffed his lines. The ceremony continued as planned and Obama delivered his inauguration speech. However, in that awkward two or three seconds when the man stumbled over the lines we the audience realised that, in this ritual, it was not only the singers and musicians who were performing but Obama himself.

This anecdote of President Obama's inauguration ceremony performance contains a number of key features relevant to this thesis. First we can comfortably describe the ceremony as a performance. It was a carefully orchestrated event that had been rehearsed both by the iterative historical ritual of "the inauguration ceremony" but also by the specific

actors involved. It was planned and scripted to create a particular representation. The fluffing of the lines, like the revelation that the classical musicians were miming along to a pre-recorded track, puts this in sharp relief because it shows up this process as it failed. Secondly, it was mediated throughout the world. Within seconds the performance was played across television and computer screens so millions of viewers could watch it miles away from the two million people standing live in the National Mall. With new communications technologies, the performance provided a 'where were you when?' moment where the answer could range from 'sitting alone on a London park bench watching it on a mobile phone' to 'huddled around a television in a Kenyan village'. Sharing the same space and time for the Obama performance was not necessary to experience it. Thirdly, the performance concerned the enactment of politics in the public sphere. The performative nature of the event was crucial to this process. To be sure of no legal ramifications because he fluffed his lines, President Obama had to retake the oath in a second, low key ceremony at the White House the following day (Siddique, 2009). This raises questions about the authenticity of the first performance – was it 'just a show', was it a symbolic transfer of power and when did Obama actually become president? Which performance was more important for the citizen audience, which did we enjoy more?

These convergent themes of performance, media and representations of political actors in the public sphere provide the starting point for this thesis and are encapsulated in the metaphor of politics-as-performance, which is the object of study. The metaphor of politics-as-performance is hardly rare or new. It exists in our everyday vernacular – of Obama as a 'political actor' on a 'world stage', of Cameron's 'parliamentary

performances' and of Blair's political 'showmanship'. However, its relevance has perhaps reached a higher level in these increasingly mediatised times. It resonates in many areas across politics from the local and small scale of a protestor shouting through a microphone at a rally to the large scale spectacle of the Obama inauguration, both highlight how politics is somehow scripted and performed.

In the course of this thesis my guiding concern is to explore the metaphor of politics-as-performance in greater detail and consider its significance to understandings of contemporary politics by setting up and drawing upon four UK-based case studies. I argue that the metaphor of politics-as-performance is more than a banal turn of phrase. It is an important tool that gives us a more experiential account of the role, form and content of political information in the deliberative public sphere. It provides us with a way of describing and understanding different political performances and navigates a path through the satellite issues of political representation, mediatised politics and deliberation.

Throughout the thesis I explore three interlinking threads of analysis that will be developed with reference to each of the empirical case studies. First, I argue that applying the metaphor of politics-as-performance highlights the highly performative nature of political representation in the public sphere. As such, the concepts and approaches of performance have a theoretical contribution to make to debates on political representation. In particular the key tenets of performance, which are centred around representation, transformation and the relationship between the performer and the audience, provide new ways of understanding how both conventional and unconventional political actors demonstrate their political

representativeness in the public sphere through the staging of political events.

Secondly, I suggest that Performance Studies provide us with a toolkit of practical techniques - from set design and characterisation to plot analysis and audience participation techniques – that help us describe this performed political representation as an embodied practice of transformation. By this I mean that performance is concerned with reflexive public practice, with both showing and doing in front of an audience, and as such focuses on where communication and action meet. In this way I argue that using the metaphor of politics-as-performance offers an account of deliberation that is embodied as well as communicative. It allows us to set the words of deliberation in the symbolic context of how these words are enacted, who is speaking them and where they are performed. It thus provides a more textured, context-driven account of political information that focuses on how political representation and deliberation are experienced in everyday life. This experience features the wide range of symbolic expressions that political actors use in their deliberative engagements in the public sphere, including emotions, stories, humour and fear as well as more traditional forms of rational discourse.

Finally, the metaphor of politics-as-performance frames the representative relationship as an interactive one of performer and audience member rather than the traditionally linear ‘represented citizen’ whose interaction with their representative begins and ends with voting for elites in elections and Parliament. In looking at both conventional and unconventional political actors, I argue that political performances offer different ways for the citizen audience to participate in the public sphere. Thus rather than performance being a negative source of inauthenticity, I explore the idea that it can be empowering for both the performing political

actor and the watching audience where both are involved in the co-production of deliberation through an exchange of representations in the public sphere.

1.1 Context: The “Restyling” of Politics”¹

Before moving on, it is important to note that this thesis is set against the backdrop of a perceived shift in the content and form of political information in Western liberal democracies like the UK and USA. Academics and journalists alike have noted a ‘restyling’ of politics that developed in the mid-nineties during the Blairite New Labour and Clinton New Deal eras and that we see reaching fever pitch in the spectacle of Barack Obama’s election campaign and inauguration.² Put simply, the central theme of this shift is that the relationship between politics, media and popular culture is becoming more interactive and fluid. With ‘high politics’ drawn closer to ‘media culture’, political actors have been ‘restyled’ with more focus on issues like personality, appearance and rhetorical style in order to create a specific representation that appeals to voters. In short, the ‘actor’ in ‘political actor’ has started to ring true.

Corner and Pels describe the shift as centred around the three Cs: consumerism, celebrity and cynicism (2003: 5). They suggest that in the UK’s dealigned mediatised democracy there is more focus on “post-ideological lifestyle choices” where political actors might be conceived as “service

¹ From the title of the book (Corner and Pels, 2003)

² This is an emerging academic subspecialty in Political Science. For example, (Corner and Pels, 2003; Fairclough, 2000; Scammell, 1995; Street, 2001)

providers" to the citizens' needs and wants (2003: 5-7). In addition to this perceived rise of citizen-consumers of the political, and its potentially positive and negative effects for democracy, there has been increased competition for visibility as the public sphere is flooded with celebrity public figures, both national and international. Television shows such as 'The X-factor' and 'Big Brother', and the online stars of sites like You Tube, join older entertainment providers like the film industry to replenish the public sphere with characters on a daily and even hourly basis. Political actors now face a more competitive environment for voter attention and can be judged by similar criteria as these celebrity performers. In some ways political information has thus moved towards a hybrid genre of 'infotainment', leading John Street to comment that "all politicians are celebrity politicians, only some are more convincing than others" (Street, 2004: 447).

It is clear that we might view this shift in a positive or negative light and this leads us to Corner and Pels' point about cynicism. Voter apathy and disengagement with high-level politics, especially parliamentary politics as evidenced by decreasing levels of turnout, is a point of anxiety for politicians and citizens alike. Some commentators such as Franklin (1994) or Postman (1986) are critical of the media's role in the transformation of the serious business of politics into "the congenial adjuncts of show business" (Postman, 1986: 4). More dramatically, Postman suggests that we are "amusing ourselves to death" as he imagines a Huxleyan future where all culture has shrivelled to the level of "burlesque" (1986: 161-168).³ The concern is that politics has undergone a process of *mediatisation* – "constrained to take on a form suitable for media representation" - that has adversely affected its

³ He references Aldous Huxley's dystopian vision of a trivialised society in his classic novel *Brave New World*. (Huxley, 1955)

quality (Couldry, 2008: 376). Judged on these terms, politics is the loser because, as talk show host Jay Leno famously quipped, “politics is [just] showbiz for ugly people”.⁴ Political actors, generally speaking, are not as attractive, charismatic or interesting as their other celebrity counterparts, a point made well by Scammell and Langer who point out that political advertising is, actually, quite boring (Scammell and Langer, 2006). This, of course, feeds into wider arguments about the role of the media, mediatisation and “high” versus “low” culture, which are themes that will be developed over the course of this thesis.

Similarly, the professionalisation of communicating political information using marketing tools such as permanent campaigning, focus groups and polling in order to appeal to the citizen-consumer might reinforce voter cynicism about the process of political representation. There are a number of ways to formulate this argument but we might summarise them in two ways – that political actors are not representative and that there has been a disconnection between the citizenry and their political counterparts, and/or that the political actors are just representations, reflecting Boorstin’s concern that we are not “haunted by reality, but by those images we have put in place of reality” (Boorstin, 1961: 6). One might argue that even the practice of generating these representations reflects a cynical view of politics centred around the selling of, rather than the commitment to, political values. Indeed this idea has a rich heritage in the influential work of the Frankfurt School (for example Adorno’s idea of the culture industry) and that of more contemporary political scientists

⁴ Jay Leno quoted in various sources, including (TheTimes)

(Scammell, 2003; Jamieson, 1996; Kavanagh, 1995; Adorno and Horkheimer, 2007).

These negative perspectives on the mixing of politics and popular culture are, as Street suggests, not a new complaint but “[built] on familiar distinctions between the trivial (entertainment) and the serious (politics), and a concern about the infection of the second by the first” (Street, 2004: 439). However, it is important to note that the first is commonly ‘infected’ by the second as well. In fact, the uses of the political within the cultural are too many to mention. From Brechtian epic theatre to contemporary television shows like the West Wing, from Wagner’s Ring Cycle to Bob Dylan’s protest songs, cultural performances often reflect a concern with politics and power whilst maintaining a commitment to entertainment. The recent Live 8 phenomenon provides a timely case in point.⁵ From a theoretical level, many practitioners argue that the didactic power of performance makes the ‘serious’ more accessible, more engaging and more potent for the audience (Boal, 1979; Plastow and Boon, 1998). As Simonson notes “as a public we return to the playhouse to be taught, and if possible to be converted” (Simonson, 1963: 89).

Audiences are indeed ‘returning to the playhouse’, albeit a mediatised one, if they ever left at all. The popularity of voting for outcomes in television shows such as ‘Big Brother’ or ‘The X-factor’ offer an enviable model for their political equivalents. In the opening pages of their book, Corner and Pels highlight this “voting paradox” with the example that 15 million viewers watched Will Young win the television show Pop Idol with 4.6 million of the

⁵ Live 8 was a series of charity concerts organised and performed in 2005 to highlight the issue of world poverty. It was intended to coincide with the G8 meeting of world leaders in Gleneagles, Scotland and the 20 year anniversary of the similar phenomenon of ‘Live Aid’.

8.7 million votes cast. Compared with the 4.5 million people who watched the 10 o'clock news during the election campaign, these statistics at least show that politics has some way to go in igniting public interest (Corner and Pels, 2003: 1). Coleman in particular has explored this issue, making comparisons between Big Brother viewers (BBs) and “political junkies” (PJs) and, in a recent paper, has looked at the performance of power in Big Brother 9 (Coleman, 2003; Coleman, 2010). Taking up this issue of representation he suggests that the problem is one of translation where “[Citizens] become frustrated by the opacity of political speech...Politicians are seen as talking at rather than sharing. This does not feel like representation” (Coleman, 2003: 757). He goes on to suggest that “nurturing a genuine respect between PJs and BBs’, between the political and the cultural, offers a more accessible route to political ‘re-connection’ than, perhaps, the negative association of the ‘infection’ of high-politics (Coleman, 2003: 758).

Whilst it is possible to over-emphasise the significance of reality television, and indeed these debates for the most part fall out-with the remit of this thesis, the continued popularity of cultural texts that resonate political issues would suggest that politics has something to learn from the cultural, not least, going back to Street’s comment above, if we are to judge who is convincing and who is not. Performance theory and the tools of performance analysis would seem to be a way forward in this respect by providing a nuanced analysis that goes beyond the polarised normative statements for and against the mixing of popular culture and politics.

However, whilst we might agree that there has been something of a media-driven restyling of politics, we might also come back to the idea that politics-as-performance is not new. In an excellent piece on the mediated persona in politics, Corner notes that “the figure of the politician has long

been the centre of political culture” (Corner, 2000: 398). Indeed we can trace the roots of drama and performance in the classical democracy of Ancient Greece. We see it in the ‘architecture of democracy’ where the Assembly resembled a theatre in structure, disposition and scale to such an extent that theatres were often used as political meeting spaces (Ley, 1991: 10-15). Plato, famously critical of the democratic system of governance, made the point well when he said: “You have set up a competition, so you can be spectators of speeches, listeners about actions...You are chasing something that is not, shall I say, real life...In brief, you have surrendered to the pleasure of being a listener and you sit there like spectators of sophists not political decision makers” (quoted in Wiles, 2000: 54).

So, we might argue that the critiques of modern-day sophists like Alastair Campbell and the concerns about the infection of high-politics with cultural performance are just echoes from the past that reflect the much larger normative questions about the nature of democracy. With this in mind, I will sketch out this theoretical context in greater detail before addressing the research aims of this thesis.

1.2 Theoretical perspectives: Democracy, deliberation and the public sphere

It is clear that many of the issues outlined above concern the public sphere and the form and content of political information therein. That this is a relevant focus for attention indicates a theoretical shift away from an aggregative conception of democracy to a more deliberative model. In this model the mediatised public sphere is an important site not only for citizen representation but also for the process by which voter preferences are transformed (Habermas, 1989; Dryzek, 2000; Elster, 1998).

In the aggregative model of democracy citizens are conceived of as isolated units, each with a set of individual preferences that are objectified and become public by voting on certain propositions. Its simplicity, where the most widely held preferences 'win' through the aggregation of the votes, is appealing. However, on reflection it offers a very particular view on representation in a system like that of the UK. As Jane Mansbridge notes in her book *Beyond Adversary Democracy* (1983), "voters pursue their individual interests by making demands on the political system in proportion to the intensity of their feelings. Politicians, also pursuing their own interests, adopt policies that buy them votes" (1983: 17).

In her book *Inclusion and Democracy* Iris Young offered an interesting criticism for our present purposes concerning the origin, formulation and transformation of preferences. She argued that if citizens are 'atomised' units with individual preferences, there are questions of where their preferences come from and how these preferences change and evolve (Young, 2000: 22). The advocates of deliberative democracy argue that the aggregative model crucially overlooks how preferences are not exogenous to the political process but are in fact situated within the political process, are part of it and can be changed by it. As Elster notes, the deliberative model is "the idea that democracy revolves around the transformation rather than simply the aggregation of preferences" (1998: 1).

This model describes a different kind of political rationality. Where aggregative democracy is concerned with instrumental rationality, the individual citizen has a desire which corresponds to a political preference and voting decision, deliberative democracy is more concerned with the communicative, inter-subjective rationality of citizens arguing about ends (Habermas, 1989). In the deliberative model there is always the possibility of

a 'right answer' both politically and indeed morally, and that decision can be reached not just by the aggregation of votes but by choosing the option that everyone agrees through rational discussion. This discussion, it is argued, takes place in the public sphere.

Conceptualising representation using the deliberative model, we see that deliberative democracy in practice becomes a multi-level system where citizens are represented by their political counterparts who deliberate on their behalf but also that the rules and manner of that representation are constructed through a process of interactive engagement. Put another way, political representation is not conceived of simply as a mirror of the citizenry in Parliament (as we see in the aggregative example above) but also a co-produced negotiation of reasons between citizen and representative that takes place in the constant backdrop of the public sphere. Moreover, it is not only the conventional 'politicians' who are engaged in this process of representation but a host of other actors in the public sphere, including the possibility that citizens represent themselves in deliberations. Thus, it widens the scope for who is considered 'representative' to include both conventional and unconventional actors, politicians and citizens.

It would seem that this deliberative turn in democratic theory is 'in vogue' and has for the most part been received favourably not least because of its intuitive appeal as a conception of democracy that is congruent with "whom we are" (Cooke, 2000: 954). As Cooke notes, it offers a desacratized "view of knowledge, which goes hand in hand with secularisation of authority" and implies that "every citizen's contribution must be seen as worthy of consideration", something that chimes well with human rights law (2000: 955). It offers a more egalitarian way of viewing the political system with citizens, in theory, being equally able to participate in the deliberative

process as elites. This possibility for participation encourages more active and reflective citizens whose role is not just to scrutinise elites but to offer their own solutions to political issues.

However, the model has been criticised as idealistic both in theory and in practice but particularly since the increased mediatisation of the public sphere. Coming back to the discussion of political style above, the role of the mass media has been criticised on deliberative terms because it changes the nature of the public sphere. It creates an environment that, it is argued, is not only unreceptive to this communicative exchange of reasons but also where some citizens' views count more than others (Meyrowitz, 1985; Habermas, 1989; Meyer, 2002). A pessimistic view of this 'mediatisation' attributes blame to the medium (initially television, but we might now include the internet as well) that restructures the presentation of political information so that "either politicians learn the skills of the medium or those already skilled in it (the celebrity) come to dominate it" (Street, 2004: 439). The purported 'linear logic' (Couldry, 2008: 377) of mediatisation means that political reasoning is thus qualitatively undermined simply because, as Postman wryly notes 'You cannot do political philosophy on television' (1986: 377). However, whilst the medium of television does present a different way of representing politics which we might judge in negative or positive terms, critiques of a mediatised public sphere are in some ways an extension of Plato's concern highlighted above. They reflect a more general problematising of the relationship between political actor and his/her spectators, where 'watching' is conceptualised as a trivialised and passive activity that is an inadequate form of political participation and deliberation.

Following this argument against the mediatised public sphere to its conclusion, we might reflect that the mediatised public sphere is problematic

for deliberative democracy not only because of the representational demands of the medium but also because of the structures surrounding the media economy. Where the idealised public sphere is envisaged as a neutral public space for equal engagement and rational deliberation, the mediatised public sphere is shaped by many political and institutional factors, not least the commercial goals that dictate the relationship between viewer figures and advertising revenue. Studies such as the Glasgow Media Group's *Bad News* (1976; 1980) point out the hegemonic practices of news presentation and note how some groups in society are consistently presented in either negative or positive ways. The argument is that rather than being a place for political issues to be debated and prejudices overturned in the pursuit of a consensual answer, the mediatised public sphere merely reinforces dominant ideologies in a way that is less to do with the public good and more to do with private gain.

This critique of the public sphere is not new. Feminist scholars have long expressed concern over this issue of deliberative inclusion in the public sphere, especially where inequalities so routinely exist at every level in terms of education, access and social values. Nancy Fraser (1990), for example, argues that there are different types of publics both strong and weak, rather than one public sphere for political discourse and decision-making. Even if the neutrality of the process of rational argument can be achieved (i.e. if deliberators can put aside their prejudices against certain groups using something like a Rawlsian "original position" (Rawls, 1972)) the deliberative model sets a high bar for entry into the discussion in terms of education, time and dedication. It also privileges rational argument as the best kind of decision-making discourse, above other less masculine forms (Benhabib, 1992; Benhabib, 1996; Young, 2000). So, the mediatised public sphere simply

shows up normative questions about the process of deliberative democracy itself.

As Dryzek points out, “deliberative democracy’s welcome for certain forms of communication is conditional”. The use of rhetorical and performative devices that we see employed by ‘celebrity’ political actors “goes against deliberative democrats who believe that the only kind of valid communication is rational argument” (2000: 1-7). But, if deliberative democracy, as some theorists suggest, really is an ideal of democracy that is “congruent with ‘whom we are’” (Cooke, 2000: 954) then why does it maintain such narrow definitions of persuasion that omit other factors like humour, storytelling and emotions that we routinely see in the experience of everyday mediatised life? Theorists such as Kellner (2000) and Daelgran (1995) have questioned the pessimistic outlook for the mediatised public sphere and suggest that the mass media can offer new prospects for democracy that are not necessarily defined by this rationalist perspective.

There is a more fundamental issue here which brings us back to the question of persuasion and political power hinted at by Plato. It would seem that the very idea of deliberative communication in the public sphere, of persuading rather than coercing, presumes an element of performance by the political actor in the process of representing different ideas and perspectives in public. As Corner notes, “the sphere of the public and the popular is the realm of the visibly ‘public’, the space of a *demonstrable* representativeness’ (Corner, 2000: 393). Strict understandings of deliberative democracy would demand that the citizen perform a process of decontextualisation to separate the speech from the speaker, to focus on ‘what is said’ not ‘how it is said’ and assess the rational arguments on their own merit. The role of the

representative is to re-present these arguments in Parliament or in the public sphere at large.

As Coleman notes, the “forms of symbolic expression and affective mobilisation are too easily overlooked by the traditionally instrumentalist political-science perspective” (Coleman et al., 2008: 787) but they form a large part of the persuasive power of any public performance. Outside the confines of hypothetical and idealised public spheres, I would question how possible and indeed how representative the process of decontextualisation is, especially considering the shift in political style discussed above, the increasing personalisation of politics (Langer, 2007) and concerns over political apathy. The practice of representation is more complex than simply the uncritical re-presentation of a rational argument in the public sphere. It takes place within a cultural context and is not just a process of copying the electorate, but of construction where the persona of the speaker “reflects and then shapes the norms of political life and indeed what ‘politics’ properly means. They [political actors] help regulate the way in which the personal is related to the political” (Corner, 2000: 401).

Here we see a move away from traditional institutional or mimetic understandings of political representation. Instead of a situation where the “representation of the people should reflect the people represented as accurately as possible” (Ankersmit, 1996: 28), these ideas lean towards a more textured, aesthetic understanding of representation where “the same dividing line runs between person represented and representative as between the real world and the world of art” (Ankersmit, 1996: 46). On this understanding the move from one medium (the electorate) to another (the body politic or representative) is not conceived as copying political reality (the thoughts, opinions and preferences of each individual citizen or

deliberator) but rather a depiction of that reality, an illusion. The art of political representation, then, is a creative process of performance that highlights certain aspects of 'political reality' and in doing so transforms it. Whilst it might be over-enthusiastic to conceptualise democracy as "a kind of radical theatrocracy" (Wiles, 2000: 54), in this thesis I argue that the political actor's performance of their persona cannot be divorced from 'trivial' factors such as appearance, tone of voice and personality because their whole body acts as a site for this performed representativeness.

1.3 Politics-as-performance; a roadmap of aims, process and arguments

From this brief sketch of the empirical and theoretical contexts we can see that the idea of a relationship between politics and performance is relevant across a wide range of academic disciplines. From debates over mediatisation from a Media Studies perspective to political theories of democracy, representation and deliberation, the metaphor of politics-as-performance would appear to sit at the cross-section between Cultural, Media and Political Studies' perspectives on the central issue of the form, content and purpose of political information. The metaphor thus acts as a useful framing device for discussing this issue in a holistic manner and this interdisciplinarity is reflected in the thesis.

Despite the range of literatures that contextualise the topic, the metaphor of politics-as-performance itself has not been looked at in great detail. Whilst, as I suggested above, many writers have examined the political in performance (in particular theatre and film) there has been far less work the other way around, despite the use of the metaphor in both everyday vernacular and academic texts. In addition to acting as an

interdisciplinary platform, this thesis is an attempt to develop the concept of performance in Political Science. In this way it builds on the use of the metaphor in the work of theorists such as Edelman, Meyer and Street (Meyer, 2002: 65-72; Street, 2004: 445; Edelman, 1985: 189) by providing an empirical, contextual account that explores the metaphor in a variety of settings. This thesis also adds to the literature that explores the concept of performance in other Social Science contexts such as Sociology (Debord, 1977; Goffman, 1973), Gender Studies (Butler, 1997) or Social Anthropology (Turner, 1988a). Moreover this thesis contributes to the literature describing the restyling of contemporary politics by introducing performance theory as a useful tool to describe the process of political representation and to understand the more performative enactments of deliberative democracy.

Alongside these theoretical and academic aims, however, there is a strong empirical backbone to this research. My starting point and guiding concern throughout has been in the underlying idea of politics-as-performance, the metaphor that we use every day in our discussions of politics. If, as I suggest in Chapter 3, metaphor is an important way of understanding and making sense of the world then my starting point was what does the metaphor of politics-as-performance say about politics? My primary aim is to offer a thick description of the metaphor to explore not only what it means but, following Yanow's work on metaphor in a policy context, 'how' it means (Geertz, 1973; Yanow, 1996). In particular, I have been interested in the negative association of the metaphor, how it is often used as a sneer against politics. Throughout this thesis, then, there is an interaction between the empirical descriptions of the metaphor and theorising of political representation and democracy that is built upon that base.

In order to map the trajectory of this thesis, in summary, the aims of this research are:

- 1. To provide a thick description of the metaphor of politics-as-performance**
- 2. To apply the techniques, theories and concepts of performance theory to four empirical case studies: the 2007 Blair-Brown premiership handover; the Scottish National Party's 2007 election campaign; the Faslane 365 nuclear blockade in 2006-2007; and the London '7/7' terrorist attack in 2005.**
- 3. To use the metaphor to explore the role of the form, content and purpose of political information in contemporary UK politics.**

In Chapter 2, I outline and develop some of the key ideas in Performance Studies and suggest how they relate to the topic of political information. This chapter acts as a roadmap and theoretical toolkit for understanding the subsequent empirical chapters. In Chapter 3, I outline the research design that I used to achieve these research aims and explore the logic of using metaphor as a research methodology in greater depth. I describe the process of 'operationalising' the metaphor by breaking it down into a series of frames used in performance analysis and then detail how I applied these frames to the four case studies in Chapters 4 through 7. My choice of case studies reflects the desire to look at both conventional and non-conventional political actors who use a variety of mediatised and non-mediatised techniques. The metaphor of politics-as-performance provides a framework for comparison

between these very different types of political actors and, as we shall see, allows us to assess their techniques in greater depth.

Chapter 4 (*Performing Politicians: Representation, Authenticity and Ritual in the Blair/Brown Handover*) and Chapter 5 (*Performing Elections: Circus, Presence and Deliberation in the case of the SNP election campaign*) concern how conventional political elites attempt to connect with the citizenry through the process of deliberation and representation in the public sphere. In *Performing Politicians* I show how two recent British prime ministers rely heavily on ritual to reinforce their authority and use dramatic techniques in their performances in an attempt to script/re-script history. In *Performing Elections* I highlight that there is less reliance on ritual and more engagement with the audience in a live and unscripted setting, reflecting a more liminal, ludic performance style than in the Blair/Brown case. These cases are both based around the personality of the 'star' performers, Tony Blair, Gordon Brown, Alex Salmond and Nicola Sturgeon. In the election case, however, there is also an extensive use of celebrity endorsement performances in the media. I reflect on at this issue of celebrity performers with regard to the 'restyling' of politics discussed above and consider whether it does qualitatively undermine deliberation.

Chapter 6 (*Performing Protest: Mediatisation, Embodiment and the Visible in the case of Faslane 365*) and Chapter 7 (*Performing Terror: Sacrifice, Spectacle and Hijacking the Public Sphere in the case of the 7/7 London bombings*) focus on non-conventional political actors, those who represent and deliberate in the public sphere but who are not Members of Parliament and operate out-with conventional politics. I explore how citizens, both as audience members and as performers, connect with the public sphere which leads me to consider the boundaries of persuasive performance and the idea of subverting, rather

than reinforcing, authority. The unauthorised and unconventional use of space, the importance of the embodied, live performer and the use of irony and costume are key features of the *Performing Protest* case study. However, in analysing the disruption to the local community and the transformations of space that the performance enacts, I consider how representative and deliberative this political action actually is. These themes are explored in greater depth in the *Performing Terror* case where the transformations of space and political actor are more permanent, more destructive and more visible than the protest case. In this case I look at the idea of performing fear as a persuasive tool and consider the use of horror techniques within the performance. In these chapters I also consider the importance of mediated performance in inserting the political actors into the public sphere. I explore how the performance is remediated through different media, particularly online media, discussing how this offers opportunities for audience interaction and participation.

1.4 Conclusion: Setting the scene for politics-as-performance

The metaphor of politics-as-performance is an intuitively engaging way of thinking about politics. Even a cursory reflection of the global political sphere reveals many areas where it resonates, from Obama's inauguration highlighted above to the polished political performances of British political actors like Tony Blair or David Cameron, and even in more dramatic unconventional events in the political sphere such as the 9/11 terror attack in New York. The metaphor focuses on the relationship between political

actors and their citizen-spectators and prompts both normative and empirical reflection on how this relationship is conducted.

In this chapter I have set the scene for further examination of the metaphor by placing it within the context of the restyling of politics, where more focus is devoted to how political actors appear and generate their persona in the public sphere rather than the policies that they support. In the course of this thesis I argue that the metaphor of politics-as-performance has an empirical contribution to make to this area by offering a way of describing this process of re-presentation in the public sphere using the techniques of performance analysis. It thus offers a more textured and contextual account of political representation and indeed representations of politics than those from a traditional political theory perspective.

I have also set the metaphor in a theoretical context by considering the deeper normative relevance of politics-as-performance. In exploring the concept of deliberative democracy, I noted that the idea of a 'political actor' is not just confined to the elite conventional politicians whose deliberations in Parliament represent the citizen. It also includes their actions in the wider public sphere as they reach out to the citizen and attempt to transform their preferences. This deliberative context allows the citizens, as spectators of these elite political actors, to participate directly and responsively in political deliberations and, in fact, to become deliberators by representing themselves in the public sphere. In both cases the political actors, both conventional and unconventional, generate political representations in the public sphere and this process constitutes, as I argue in this thesis, a highly performative form of deliberation. As such the metaphor of politics-as-performance is a useful frame through which to access this aspect of deliberation and highlights the blurring of conventionality and unconventionality in the public sphere.

Exploring the metaphor of politics-as-performance in this thesis highlights the area where deliberation and representation meet. As I argue in the empirical chapters, the political actors explored in this thesis differ in their representative claims and in their commitment to deliberation and this is manifest through the staging of their performances and the opportunities they offer for audience participation. Framing these issues through the lens of performance theory highlights the similarities between the performer/audience relationship and the representative/citizen relationship in the context of political deliberation. This thesis thus provides an interdisciplinary contribution to the field of deliberative democracy that pays due attention to the embodied practice of deliberating and representing in the public sphere.

Chapter 2:

Understanding Performance; (Re)presentation, Transformation and Interaction

'Political actors', 'world stage', 'parliamentary performances', the 'theatre of parliament'; the metaphor of politics-as-performance exists in the everyday vernacular of political discourse. However, as with many metaphorical modes of speech, it is often used in passing and as such its meaning remains fluid and underdeveloped. In order to develop a thick description and deeper understanding of the metaphor it is important to unpack the lead concept of performance in greater detail as a prelude to operationalising the metaphor for the empirical research. This chapter therefore acts as a context for understanding the case studies that follow as I explore the idea of performance using the frame of the existing literatures from the discipline of Performance Studies.

The discipline of Performance Studies is a wide, varied and highly contested field that attracts theorists with a background in a range of disciplines, from experimental theatre practitioners (such as Richard Schechner) and theatre theorists (such as Marvin Carlson) to literary and linguistic theorists (such as Judith Butler or Jacques Derrida) and anthropologists (such as Victor Turner). As Peggy Phelan notes in her introduction to the collection *The Ends of Performance*, the field emerged by forging theoretical links between the disciplines of Theatre Studies and Anthropology. Working between these disciplines, there was an impression that the terminology and analytical techniques of theatre did not sufficiently cover the range of intercultural practices that were observed in social rituals,

dramas and spectacles (Phelan and Lane, 1998; Turner, 1988b). Thus a new lexicon of 'performance' seemed a better way to describe these practices and the rich field of Performance Studies arose to fill in these analytical gaps. However the concept of performance and indeed the discipline of Performance Studies are not without criticism. As Phelan goes on to suggest, Performance Studies might be variously described as "a narrow, even small-minded, version of Cultural Studies", "parasitic" on Austin's linguistic performativity (Austin, 1962: 22-23) and "a reactionary response to the simulations and virtualities of postmodernism" (Phelan and Lane, 1998: 3-10).

As I go on to explore the concept of performance further then, it is certainly with this critical perspective in mind and I will attempt to address some of these charges throughout the course of this chapter. Nonetheless, to follow Schechner's observation, the fragmentary and interdisciplinary nature of Performance Studies would in itself warrant a whole thesis in 'comparative performatology' to do it justice (Schechner and Appel, 1990: 3). For this reason I focus primarily on performance as it is conceptualised by Schechner, with contributions from Turner, Phelan, Carlson and Patrice Pavis. Whilst it is not exhaustive of the possible theoretical directions for performance theory, Schechner's work provides an accessible introduction to the idea of performance which is useful for the metaphorical context of the topic at hand and for the aim of providing a thick description. Moreover, to a large extent Performance Studies was pioneered in Social Science by Richard Schechner and Victor Turner (Schechner, 2003; Schechner, 1988; Schechner and Schuman, 1976; Turner, 1988b) and as such their ideas are more readily transferable to the political context.

Throughout this chapter I focus on those aspects of performance theory that are most resonant in the metaphor of politics-as-performance and try to develop some theoretical links between performance and the role, form and content of political information. I argue that performance is an important part of both representation and deliberation and offers a new conceptual framework for thinking about deliberation in the public sphere.

2.1 Understanding performance

It seems fitting to express this chapter in the two parts that are crucial to any performance; that is the performance itself (for example, the show, the happening or the spectacle) and the audience, or the group of people who are watching the performance. Despite separating them in this way, it is not my intention to treat these as two opposing and independent groups. In fact, a central theme in Performance Studies is that the presence of an audience is the very definitional basis of performance and that true meaning lies in the interaction between these relational two groups. In the opening chapter of his influential book *Performance Theory*, Schechner makes this point when he loosely defines performance as “an activity done by an individual or group in the presence of another individual or group” (2003: 22). Unpacking this definition further is a useful starting point for this discussion.

We might draw out two key ideas in Schechner’s preliminary definition that resonate with lay understandings of performance. First, it suggests that performance is an activity, by which I mean that it is concerned with actions and the process by which actions are planned and executed. Schechner makes this point well elsewhere when he invites readers to consider other understandings of the verb ‘to perform’ (2002: 22). To perform can mean ‘to

carry out', 'to achieve' or 'to execute'. On reflection, these words are all concerned with the idea of 'doing' and this semantic meaning delivers a basic understanding of performance which is that it is a practice or a mode of doing. Put another way, while you can imagine, you cannot 'think' a performance, you ultimately have to enact a performance.

Continuing to focus on the verb 'to perform' leads on to the second key idea in Schechner's preliminary definition. In addition to understandings based on 'doing', 'to perform' also means 'to present', 'to show' or 'to display' and this highlights the importance of an audience. A performance is a particular kind of practice that is intended to be seen by other people. As such the actions in performance are often planned, rehearsed and executed in a particular way with this prospective audience in mind. This reflexivity of performance actions, where the performer is self-aware about the cause and possible effects of her/his actions, theoretically marks them out as different from other everyday actions. Schechner, drawing on Levi-Strauss, employs a cooking analogy to highlight this traditional difference between everyday life and artistic performance: "Art is cooked and life is raw. Making art is the process of transforming raw experience into palpable forms" (2003: 30). However, as I demonstrate throughout this thesis, the boundaries between what is a performance action and what is an everyday action, and indeed whether there is a clear distinction between them, is hotly contested.

Putting these two key ideas of 'doing' and 'presenting' together generates a working understanding of performance as a sort of reflexive public practice. Even here in the early stages of defining performance, its links to the political sphere are apparent. In relation to political theory, the idea of visibly public practice is fundamental to representation and indeed the concept of democracy at large. Transparent government, the need for

representatives to debate publicly in Parliament, competitive elections and the presence of many interest groups vying for attention in the public sphere - many of the necessities of a healthy deliberative democracy require public practice, or at least that most government actions are presented for public scrutiny. Part of the negative association of politics with performance centres on the relationship between these public practices and the audience and the concern that these actions, in their reflexivity, are inauthentic, manipulative or, to paraphrase Schechner's metaphor, overcooked.

2.1.1 To what end? The purpose of performance

If performance is a practice that is concerned with presenting something to an audience, or as Schechner suggests "showing doing" (Schechner, 2002: 22), it makes sense to question to what end. By this I mean that if the performers are reflexive about the actions that they are presenting to the audience then they must have a purpose or aim for these actions and a desired re-action from the audience.

Consider the different range of activities that might be subsumed under the idea of performance; spectacular sporting events like the Olympics, the rituals of a witch doctor in Papua New Guinea or community theatre in Glasgow. These are all public practices where performers reflexively enact particular actions in front of an audience in the different genres of spectacle, ritual and drama. Each performance has its own range of overlapping purposes and effects. The Olympics, for example, are an entertaining display of competitive sports but also promote the host country on the international stage, the Glasgow community theatre gives a voice to under-represented

youths but also persuades its audience to lobby the government for change. In some ways then, each performance is a unique and specific event whose effects and purposes are driven by the context of the audience and wider circumstances.

However, the more normative question of the proper purpose of performance is one that generates much debate in Performance Studies. As the above examples show, whilst lay understandings of performance might locate its primary purpose as entertainment, there is a plethora of other functions that can be achieved by reflexively tailoring actions for public presentation; education, community-building, persuasion and the formation of identity are just a few examples. Schechner summarises these possible purposes as situated on a polar continuum between efficacy and entertainment, where ritual is usually closer to the efficacy pole and commercial theatre closer to entertainment (2003: 129-136).

The idea of a continuum between efficacy and entertainment is a key area where the ideas of performance and politics overlap. Well-known playwrights and theatre theorists have developed passionate arguments about where performance ought to sit on the continuum, often with reference to the political goals of a performance. Augusto Boal's theatre of the oppressed (1979), Antonin Artaud's theatre of cruelty (Artaud and Richards, 1958) and Brecht's epic theatre (Brecht and Willett, 1964) all show how performance can be constructed to achieve political change, if not revolution. These texts offer very different techniques to achieve this goal, be it showing the audience an uncomfortable truth (Artaud), making them active participants in the performance (Boal) or actively avoiding the escapism of naturalist drama (Brecht). But, whilst the techniques are different, they have

in common a desire to highlight the power of performance beyond mere entertainment or fun.

That performances attempt to achieve political goals has a long heritage in popular culture. As Hilton suggests, it is known as the 'dangerous art' for its ability to influence the audience and lead to political action (Hilton, 1987: 2), and it is easy to think of performances that aim to subvert or reinforce authoritative structures, especially in the genre of political theatre. Famous Scottish theatrical examples are John McGrath's *'The Cheviot, The Stag and the Black, Black Oil'* (1981), which looks at class issues through the lens of the Highland clearances and North Sea oil exploration, and the more recent and highly successful *'Black Watch'* by Gregory Burke, a tense piece about the Iraq War.⁶ Performances of these plays entertain by employing the traditional techniques of performance to gather and hold the audience's attention including compelling narratives, symbolic expression, emotive acting, humour and music. At the same time, however, they also present complex political issues. *Black Watch*, for example, explores the wider concepts of war, individual loss, human suffering, global economics, class and the alienation of geopolitics as well as being a story about the men in the Black Watch regiment. *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Big Black Oil* explores the issues of human rights, nationalism and national identity and the importance of local resistance as well as telling a story about the history of Scotland. By taking the 'real-life' stories of the Black Watch regiment or the Highland Clearances and 'cooking' them in this way, the performers not only make

⁶ John McGrath's play *'The Cheviot...'* was performed by the 7:84 Theatre Group in community centres across Scotland in the 1970s. Gregory Burke's 2006 play *'Black Watch'* was performed in the National theatre of Scotland and then toured worldwide. It featured the story of the ill-fated Black Watch regiment that suffered heavy losses in 2004. Both plays gained critical acclaim.

them more accessible but offer a very particular and persuasive interpretation of each situation. It is this mixture of efficacy and entertainment which makes performance such a useful tool not only for exploring political issues but also for persuading the audience to take a side.

As Hilton suggests, performance and performers are not often held in high regard by society (1987: 127-145). Putting aside socio-economic reasons, this is partly because this power is in the hands of individuals who are reflexively changing their actions to achieve a certain goal. Another way of expressing this activity is, of course, lying. This is because the practice of performance often involves embellishing or augmenting the 'truth' of a situation to achieve a certain goal. Whilst this is acceptable if it is 'just' entertainment, when actual political decisions are involved the situation becomes less clear. This mixture between 'real' and 'performance' on the one hand, and entertainment and efficacy on the other is a central theme of this thesis and will be explored in each of the empirical chapters.

This concern about the continuum between efficacy and entertainment also resonates if we consider the idea of performance within the political. However in the domain of politics we see this problem put on its head. As I have discussed in the introductory chapter, a negative association of the metaphor of politics-as-performance is that politics is being trivialised to the level of entertainment. In both representative and deliberative democratic contexts, the role of the political actor should be decidedly efficacious because the political actor is the key vehicle through which change is initiated. The metaphor of politics-as-performance thus highlights a possible tension between efficacy and entertainment in the political sphere. As I explore in my empirical work, the metaphor prompts reflection on the extent

to which entertainment can play a role in political representation and the practice of deliberation.

A second issue here is to consider whether it is actually a problem if performance in politics really is efficacious. The key purpose of political action in the deliberative sphere is persuasion but if this goal is achieved through performance which, as I have suggested, is the process of reflexively tailoring actions to achieve that goal, then is political action intrinsically inauthentic and manipulative? This problem is encompassed in recent times by the phenomenon of 'spin' where certain actions, such as delivering a soundbite, appearing on daytime television and leaking 'dodgy dossiers', are reflexively performed by political actors to generate a positive public persona. The concern is not only that it is inauthentic and not 'real life' but that the electorate never knows the reality in the first place. Put another way, the electorate never knows who the political actors 'really' are. As we shall see in the empirical chapters, this can be problematic for representation.

In discussing to what end a performer reflexively performs certain actions, I have suggested that we might view their purposes on a continuum between efficacy and entertainment and this has uncovered some interesting debates as to the proper role of politics in performance and, indeed, performance in politics. Doing so invites discussion on the relationship between 'real life' and performance, both in terms of how performance resembles real life and what effect performance has on real life. I explore these ideas through the lens of three important concepts in performance theory that recur throughout this thesis and frame the overlapping relationship between politics and performance. These are representation, transformation and interaction.

2.1.2 Performance and (re)presentation

The relationship between performance and 'real life' is, as it is in the case of most art, one of aesthetic representation. Traditional understandings of representation are expressed in Schechner's cooking analogy discussed earlier. If life is raw and art is cooked, then the implication is that life 'comes first' and art is a separate form in itself but also a copy that has been derived from the raw experience (Schechner, 2003: 28-30). This mimetic conception of representation takes as a central theme the idea that there is difference between the realm of the real and the realm of representation. Performance, then, is the re-presentation of reality because the publically performed actions we see in performances mimic, or are copies of, aspects of reality. In this way performances are said to 'hold a mirror up to nature' (Turner, 1988a: 22).

This is where the issue of inauthenticity that is invoked by the idea of politics-as-performance can be seen at its clearest. Performances, like any mirror, are all about appearances. Whilst performers may appear to be, for example, sympathetic by performing particular actions it does not follow that they really are sympathetic. The idea of a performance problematises identity by inviting questions about the true 'self' of any performer and the relationship between what appears to be and what really is.

On the mimetic understanding of aesthetic representation, there is a clear boundary between what is real (the Iraq war, for example) and what is the copy that re-presents the real (like *Black Watch*). Artistic performances may appear to be copies of reality, but they are often not perfect copies and as

such the boundary between reality and illusion is easily determined. For example, in the performance world of *Black Watch* 'time' is different from real time, scripted conversation is more eloquent than real conversation and music provides a dramatic soundtrack to action sequences. In watching the performance, the audience and performer engage in an interactive practice of make believe where the performance world has a different set of rules, signs and symbols to (re)present the real world (Hilton, 1987: 127-145). In the case of politics-as-performance, however, the boundaries between reality and illusion are not so clear. At its essence the charge of inauthenticity is concerned with knowledge about the performance process and how the relationships between the audience and the performers are navigated in light of that knowledge.

However, the idea of any meaningful separation between the real and the representation is a matter for intense debate, both within Performance Studies and, indeed, in a wider epistemological context. Erving Goffman's *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* famously explored this issue in the context of a theatrical metaphor and questioned the idea of a 'real' singular self at all. In ethnographically researching human social interactions he suggested that all of social life consisted of overlapping roles performed through on and off stage practices to an extent to which human beings are not overtly aware: 'We all act better than we know how.' (1973: 74). He suggested that these performances are intrinsically interactive and shaped by both the environment in which they are situated and the audience's response. On this understanding there is no knowable 'reality', rather a series of socially-enacted performances. Applying this to the issue at hand, politics-as-performance is only part of the wider socially-constructed performance world that humans inhabit.

The idea that 'all the world's a stage' is, of course, a familiar one, and indeed one that even finds some support on a neurological level as Paul Ekman's work on the significance of mirror neurons has shown (1982). Goffman's methodological and analytical approach to the issue, whilst it focuses primarily on theatre rather than performance, is a key influence on this thesis. His theatrical metaphor that frames social interactions as forms of public practice provides us with the challenge of describing and understanding this practice. The conceptual tool of performance updates and expands on the theatrical metaphor by providing a platform for comparison between mediatised and un-mediatised types of public practice. It also highlights the complexity of representation not only in this context of agents generating an impression of self, but also in the context of conventional and unconventional political actors generating political representations.

The theme of mediatised representation and reality has already been developed in a particularly interesting direction within the discipline of Media Studies where relevant examples include Daniel Boorstin's *The Image* (1961), Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle* (1977) and Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation* (1994). Even in Political Science there has been a linguistic turn as outlined in Murray Edelman's classic *The Symbolic Uses of Politics* (1985). A common theme amongst these writers is the argument that with the advent of postmodern media technologies and the saturation of realistic representations within our everyday experience, the boundary between reality and representation is at best questionable and at worst completely broken down. In fact, for Baudrillard this occurs to the extent that now the representation (a series of signs and symbols referred to as the simulacrum) is more important than the reality and represents only other

signs and symbols within the simulation. So where we might reflect on *Black Watch* as a representation of the real Iraq War, Baudrillard's work suggests that the various layers of representation that the Iraq war undergoes (through, for example, television news, plays, internet images and other mediated forms) are so thick that we no longer have a connection to anything real or authentic. For Baudrillard, as suggested by the title of his book on the first Iraq war, *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place* (1995).

Exploring the theme of aesthetic representation and performance inevitably leads into deeper epistemological and even ontological questions about our experience of reality. However, whilst the idea that 'all the world's a stage' supplies an important backdrop to this study, it is important to make the distinction between the claim that politics *is* performance and the focus of this study which is politics *as* performance. In this thesis I use the metaphor of politics-as-performance as a framing tool to analyse the form, content and role of political information and explore the way that political actors insert themselves into the public sphere.

The strength of the metaphor is that in destabilising the assumption of a dichotomous truth between reality and representation we are led to question the nature of political reality and political representation. Representation in the political context can be understood both as a verb in that MPs or interest groups *represent* people but also as a noun in that there are representations of politics in the public sphere. Often these two understandings overlap as in the case of 'spin doctoring' the public persona of MPs. Political representation in both senses involves demonstrably reflecting the political reality of a situation. For example, the reality an MP represents is the political preferences of the majority of voters within their constituency.

Similarly a photo of world leaders in a newspaper represents the reality of an international political meeting.

Reflecting on the idea of politics-as-performance highlights the fact that political reality is less accessible and thus often more fluid and more contested than perhaps the wider 'reality' that we all experience in daily life. For example, the political preferences of individual citizens are constantly changing and must be researched and collated to become 'knowable', and we might argue that the 'reality' of the international meeting is only known to the individuals who experienced it in person. Moreover the rules of what counts as political representation are also a matter for debate. This problem is illustrated by criticisms of Parliament as unrepresentative because of the low percentages of women, ethnic minorities and disabled MPs (Kalitowski, 2009). This logic suggests that it is not only the actions of the MP in Parliament that need to be representative but their identity and lifestyle also.

As we shall see over the course of applying the metaphor of politics-as-performance to the case studies, political representation is not an objective process of copying political reality. As Ankersmit perceptively notes, political reality 'does not exist before representation but only exists through it' (1996: 48). As such, in practice political representation has much in common with the creative process of aesthetic representation and the metaphor of politics-as-performance gives us tools with which to analyse this process.

2.1.3 Performance and Transformation

A second key idea in Performance Studies, one that is closely linked to representation, is the concept of transformation. Victor Turner views

transformation as the defining characteristic of performance. For him whilst performances are said to hold a mirror up to nature in their representation of reality, they are more like “magic mirrors” that transform, distort and reinterpret that reality (1988a: 22-23). As we saw in discussing the aims of performance, at its essence whilst a performance may be a copy of reality it is also a process of construction and change.

The idea of transformation permeates all areas of performance, most obviously in the mind and body of the performer who is reflexively altering his or her actions for the audience. It is apparent in the examples mentioned above- the Olympic athlete, the community theatre actor and the witch doctor all enact some sort of transformation of their actions in their performances, be it in the way they move, speak or interact with other people. However, this idea is perhaps seen at its clearest in traditional naturalist drama and Stanislavski’s highly influential theory of acting known as The Method (Stanislavski and Hapgood, 1937). The central premise of The Method is that the actor’s performance should be as close to ‘real life’ as possible, to the extent that the audience and even the actor herself cannot tell the difference. In addition to the performer’s body taking on the actions of someone else, their mind must also think the thoughts of someone else for the duration of the performance – they must, in a literal sense, transform into the character. As such, the preparation for the transformation into the character often extends long before and after the actual performance. In a sense, for the actor the performance experience is a transformative, ongoing process of becoming as they attempt to ‘live the part’ .

Stanislavski’s Method is not the only transformative performance technique, and indeed I shall explore a number of other techniques through the course of the empirical work, but it is useful to mention because it

highlights the link between performance and identity. The process of 'showing doing' means that the performer engages in a transformative process of becoming through reflexively performing certain actions. The performer's identity throughout the performance remains fluid as she is constantly in flux between her 'real self' and fully becoming 'the character', both in her own mind and crucially in the minds of the audience members. Performance analysis provides us with a way of analysing the relationship between performing certain actions and transforming their identity. It focuses on the symbolic meanings of actions and how they translate into a message for the audience. In this way, performance is the point where action and communication meet. As I outline in the four case studies, performance analysis allows us to consider how the political performer uses the 'magic mirror' of performance and enacts these transformations for the audience.

One of the further strengths of performance theory is that it understands the performer within the context of the performance setting. As I hinted above in my discussion of *Black Watch*, it is not just the performers who undergo transformations in the course of a performance. The performance space is also transformed into a relevant setting, objects are transformed into props and the ambient background noise is transformed with music or sound effects. As such, throughout this thesis I view the symbolic actions of the performers in the context of the performance world, describing these wider transformations in detail and considering whether these are permanent.

The idea of transformation in performance, however, is perhaps most relevant when applied to its desired effect on the audience and society at large. The transformations of both the performers and the performance setting are enacted with the intention that the audience is similarly transformed, be it in political, emotional or social terms.

Throughout his body of work, Victor Turner explores how performance can be viewed as a powerfully transformative social practice, with particular reference to the anthropological context of ritual. In *The Anthropology of Performance* (1988a) Turner makes a case for the central importance of performance as a catalyst of social transformation. He argues that “the dominant genres of performance in societies at all levels of scale and complexity tend to be *liminal phenomena*. They are performed in privileged spaces and time, set off from the periods and areas reserved for work, food and sleep” (Turner, 1988a: 25). Liminality (derived from the word ‘limen’ meaning ‘threshold’) can be summarised as ‘being betwixt and in between’ which we might interpret in spatial, temporal and even identity terms (Turner, 1988a; Mahdi et al., 1987). For Turner, whilst these ritual performances are both privileged and authoritative, they also introduce instability into the system that encourages the audience to question and subvert the existing social structures. He goes on to explain that performances might be “likened to loops in a linear progression, where the social flow bends back on itself, in a way does violence to its own development, meanders, inverts...puts everything so to speak in the subjunctive mood as well and the reflexive voice” (Turner, 1988a: 25-28).

This idea of the subjunctive mood of performances - of their expression of desires and wishes for the future that do not correspond with the current facts of the situation - is, for Turner, central to the transformative power of performance. As he suggests, performances “are scenes of play and experimentation, as much as of solemnity and rules”. In addition to “sustaining cherished social and cultural principles and forms”, they also turn them “upside down and [examine] them by various metalanguages, not all of them verbal...making worlds that never were on land or sea but that

might be, could be, may be, and bringing in all the tropes, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche etc., to endow these alternative worlds with magical, festive, or sacred power, suspending disbelief and remodelling the terms of belief” (Turner, 1988a: 21-33).

Performances are transformative, then, because they are realms of possibility that show the audience a world that perhaps does not exist now but could. Turner goes on to generate a coherent linear model for social drama and develops a companion concept to the liminal, the more revolutionary and more voluntary liminoid (1988a). Whilst it is not my primary objective to focus exclusively on Turner’s work in this thesis, its relevance to the political sphere is immediately apparent. The business of politics, as we shall see over the course of the empirical chapters, is often situated in privileged spaces, although interestingly to varying degrees. The sense of the subjunctive mood, and indeed the creation of subversive anti-worlds by transformations of space, actors, props and audience, resonates particularly well when I explore the political events that aim to catalyse change such as the SNP election campaign or the Faslane protest.

The idea of transformation is relevant more generally to the role, form and content of political information. Political actors transform themselves through image-management actions in order to appear better, more trustworthy or more authoritative. These transformations form the political landscape that is the backdrop to deliberative democracy. The goal of these transformations is, in turn, to transform citizen preferences and, by extension, transform society. As an illustrative example we might consider how spectacular performances such as the Nuremberg trials achieved this sort of transformation on a macro-scale. The metaphor of politics-as-performance provides us with the tools to understand these series of

transformations in context and frames the relationship between performer and spectator not as linear but as interactive in the co-production of transformations.

2.1.4 Performance and interaction

This leads to the final area where politics and performance overlap which is in the idea of interaction. Traditional conceptions of conventional political representation conceive of the citizen-audience as fairly passive outside of the action of voting the representative political actor into or out of power. This action bestows the representative with an electoral mandate to take further decisions in Parliament. After the representative 'copy' of their political preferences has been confirmed by an election, the citizen's role is to watch the elected representatives that they have empowered wield authority over the functions of the state. Their subsequent interactions with these representatives are quite controlled with the top-down political elites being watched from afar in the parliament and in the public sphere. In fact, the sneer of politics-as-performance as manipulative implies this passivity as it imagines the citizen audience in the thrall of powerful inauthentic political actors and their enabling media masters.

However, applying the metaphor of politics-as-performance less prejudicially to the public sphere encourages us to conceptualise political representation as a form of reflexive public practice. As such, it highlights the active role of the citizen beyond the act of voting. In addition to the elite political representatives there is a host of unconventional political actors who publicly re-present the views of citizens in the public sphere. This includes

individual citizens themselves who take action by writing letters of complaint, organising public petitions, participating in protests or engaging in subversive acts such as the public refusal to pay taxes (Parry et al., 1992). The metaphor of politics-as-performance generates a platform on which to compare these actors in terms of the representations that they generate. In this way, performance offers a mode of conventionality for the unconventional political actor and conceives of both deliberation and representation as more interactive and participatory with the non-elite citizens.

The sneer of politics-as-performance suggested above also implies an old-fashioned ‘hypodermic needle’ approach to the audience members and how they watch performances.⁷ In fact, the analytical approaches used in both Performance Studies and Audience Studies conceive of a more active and interactive role for the audience watching a performance, which I explore in the next half of this chapter. I argue that the metaphor of politics-as-performance actually encourages us to conceive of political representation as an interactive way of reaching out to the citizen-audience and co-constructing the political rather than the passivity that representation-as-copying implies. As I suggest in this thesis, political representation creates political reality and it does so with assistance from members of the citizen-audience in their roles as both spectators and participant-deliberators.

In this way, politics-as-performance frames the relationship between political representative and citizen as multi-directional, participatory and

⁷ The hypodermic needle theory of communication holds that the mass media has a direct influence over its audience and that their opinions can be immediately changed by viewing certain performances. It was popular after the high propaganda of World War 2 but has since been criticised as overly simplistic and conceiving of the audience as wholly passive. See (Bineham, 1988)

empowering for both. As I explore in the case studies, deliberation is similarly a multidirectional process where attempts to deliberate in the public sphere do not always originate 'from above' in the form of political consultations ordered by official representatives but in the interactions of citizens in live and mediatised staged political events. The metaphor thus offers a more egalitarian way of thinking about politics.

2.1.5 A note on Performativity

Before moving on to discuss the audience in greater detail, it is pertinent to end this discussion of performance with a note on the close theoretical concept of performativity. Performativity was originally developed as a linguistic concept to describe the speech situation where 'saying is doing'. As Austin explains in his book *How to Do Things With Words* (1962: 6-8), there are instances where just performing certain utterances achieves an action, for example speaking the words 'I now pronounce you husband and wife' performs the act of marriage. Such speech acts are performative in the sense that in performing the words, you perform the action that the words describe. The link to performance as I have outlined it above is immediately obvious – if performance is concerned with 'showing doing', the performative is more concerned with 'saying doing'.

However, as Austin suggests, it is not always enough just to utter the words. He highlights examples of what he calls "infelicitous" performatives (1962: 6-8), which are performative utterances that have gone awry because the intention of the speaker is not synchronized with the statement, as is the case with performatives uttered during on-stage theatrical marriage

ceremonies or making false promises. Whilst Austin himself viewed these infelicitous performatives as merely “hollow” and “parasitic”, the intellectual determination to qualify what makes the distinction between felicitous and infelicitous performatives has taken the idea of performativity out of the linguistic realm and into that of social science.

Judith Butler’s work is particularly relevant to the metaphor of politics-as-performance. Like Derrida (2001), she locates the authoritative power of certain performances as ones that are achieved through iteration and citation of previous performances. Applying her ideas persuasively to gender in her influential book *Gender Trouble* (Butler, 1990: 33), she argues that gender identities are constructed iteratively through the “repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts”, which are then self-perpetuating through language. So, like de Beauvoir, she believes that you are not born ‘female’, you become female through this performative process (1988). This contrasts with biological notions of gender as an in-born and unchanging characteristic of selfhood and implies that such performances can be critically deconstructed and subverted.

The link to performance theory is now explicit. The ‘transformative process of becoming’ is not just relevant to actors on-stage but, if we agree with Butler, is the very practice of identity formation. Again, we see the argument that the ‘self’ does not exist in any fixed way, but is constantly re-made (or, more pertinently, performed) by repetition of certain rehearsed acts. This implies that performance is a crucial component to the whole theory of subjectivity.

Butler remains optimistic about the political potential of performance as she considers the relationship between authoritative and transgressive

performances (1997; 1990). Taking 'drag queens' as an example, she argues that their transgressive performances of gender identity put the stylised repetitive acts that constitute gender in sharp relief by making fun of them and by offering an alternative. Like Turner, she sees not only the reinforcing power of the status quo in performances, but also more subversive revolutionary possibilities. The concept of performativity thus has a capillary life throughout the empirical chapters as it puts this idea of subversive performance in focus and makes us consider the criteria for inclusion or exclusion in authoritative performances. I argue that one is not born statesmanlike, one becomes it by deriving the performance style from the repeated performances of 'statesmanlike' actors (political or indeed cultural) in the mass media. As such, making these performances public, inserting themselves into the public sphere, is of paramount importance in becoming statesmanlike because the audience must witness the transformation to make it meaningful.

2.2 Understanding Audience

In reviewing the concept of performance, I have followed Schechner and Turner and conceptualised it as a transformative practice of representation that is concerned with 'showing doing'. These twin themes of display and action place the idea of 'audience' at the centre of the concept of performance because they raise the issue of who the action is displayed to and how these actions are received. As such, the issue of 'the audience' is one that raises some interesting debates within performance theory about the relationship between a performance and its audience and, perhaps more pertinently, what it ought to be. Exploring how the audience views, interprets and acts upon a performance problematises some of the fundamental principles within performance theory and prompts reflection on the nature of representation. Indeed this led to some of the critiques by Phelan that were cited at the start of this chapter.

In reviewing these debates, I argue that these problems are echoed in the relationship between the citizen and political actor. I suggest that the metaphor of politics-as-performance encourages us to focus not only on how political information is generated but how it is received. For any given performance there is not just one audience but many, and the nature of representation is such that performances are polysemic. The metaphor of politics-as-performance thus offers a more contextual account of political representation in the public sphere. It also conceptualises the citizenry as interpreters and co-creators of political 'reality' who have the possibility of participating in deliberations by enacting their own counter performances.

2.2.1 The role of the audience

If the role of the performer is to display then it follows that the role of the audience is to watch. At first blush we might consider that the role of the audience is quite unproblematic, not least because of the apparent passivity of 'watching'. However, reflecting on theories of aesthetics and indeed the rich heritage of literatures within Audience Studies and the study of visual culture, shows that 'watching' is not as simple as it would first appear.

The practice of 'watching' is concerned with the physical, embodied act of seeing. Perhaps for this reason, performance theory has focused on the phenomenological nature of being an audience member, in that the role of the audience is to experience the performance. This links back to Schechner's basic definition of performance discussed above, that a performance is an activity done in the presence of other people. Experiencing a performance, or being in the presence of a performance, however, is not only concerned with seeing. It is the full sensory experience comprising of sound, taste, smell and feeling or touch that we might categorise as perception. Drawing on the philosophical tradition of phenomenology, this approach gives importance to the audience's direct subjective experience of the performance as well as the "living bodies" of the performers (Fischer-Lichte, 2008: 32).

This focus on lived experience, both in the practice of performance and in the activity of the audience, is perhaps the reason that cultural performances such as theatre, dance and ritual, are customarily subsumed under the category of 'living arts'. This distinguishes them from literature or fine art because they are embodied, interactive practices rather than the production of objects. Whilst this is not necessarily a coherent distinction (as we shall

see later in this discussion) it does highlight that there appears to be something phenomenologically different to reading, for example, Macbeth and experiencing a performance of Macbeth. This focus on the material being and lived experience is a key strength that the metaphor of politics-as-performance brings to the political sphere. As I illustrate in the empirical work, it frames political information as a lived experience and focuses on how it looks, sounds, smells and feels. It allows us to describe political representation as an embodied interactive practice, as a living art.

For the purposes of this thesis, I will to a large extent accept this phenomenological approach to audience as valid, in so far as it locates the audience member as a material being situated within a certain spacio-temporal context and describes that person's relation to the performance as one of perception. However, focusing on phenomenological experience highlights some issues for performance theory. In particular, it raises the following question: if perception is so subjective, how do we agree on what a performance means and indeed how do we judge it? Of course this is an issue for the tradition of phenomenology in general and keys into many of the ontological issues about the nature of being and reality that the discussion of representation highlighted above. Throughout the course of the empirical chapters, I argue that the answer to this issue of subjectivity of perception is not objectivity, where a performance is objectively judged as good, bad, effective or authoritative. A better response is intersubjectivity where the wider shared reality is socially constructed through language and audience responses to the symbolic representations in performances are located within this context.

From the perspective of the audience, then, in addition to experiencing a performance they also form a coherent message from the symbols and

practices that they perceive. This idea of performance as a form of communication within a socially constructed reality has a long heritage in Media, Film and Linguistic Studies. In these contexts representations and images are subject to the tool of semiotic analysis to identify and describe the signs, symbols, myths and signifiers that the performers use (see (Lacey, 1998) for an excellent overview). The idea that there can be a single meaning for any representation, such as that which the author (or artist/performer) intended, has been destabilised by poststructural theorists such as Barthes and Derrida. A poststructuralist approach holds that signs generate many meanings and as such the quest for the author's intended meaning is flawed (Barthes and Heath, 1977; Derrida, 1978). As Barthes notes in an often quoted passage of his essay 'The Death of the Author', "a text's unity lies not in its origins...but in its destination" (Barthes and Heath, 1977: 148) .

In the field of Audience Studies this poststructuralist linguistic turn coupled with empirical research on audience experiences has challenged the linear 'hypodermic needle' approach to the performance-audience relationship. Rather than assuming that the audience passively experiences and is transformed *by* the performance, Audience Studies offers a much more textured account based on 'uses and gratifications' (Brooker and Jermyn, 2003: 5-7). This approach to the audience highlights that whilst there may be dominant, preferred or shared meanings for performances (Hall, 1973), the relationship between audience and performance is context-driven and multi-directional to the extent that, as Sturken and Cartwright succinctly put it in their discussion of images "viewers make meaning" just as much as "images...construct audiences" (Sturken and Cartwright, 2001: 45). Applying this to the political context highlights the multi-directional nature of both

representation and deliberation where citizens co-construct the nature of their representation and engage in deliberations in the public sphere.

Reflecting on the audience as active co-producers of meaning we can also consider that the audience can be empowered through performance. Laura Mulvey's essay 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' offers an influential formulation of this argument (1975). In providing a psychoanalytic approach to film, she argues that the male-centric gaze of audience members is not only active but actually disempowers those they are observing because the subjective gaze reduces the performers to the level of objects. In addition to the reflexive practice of performance being an innately political act, the act of watching performance can be as well.

This, then, is another area where the concepts of politics and performance overlap. As I have mentioned in the introductory chapter, critiques of the role of popular culture in politics often stem from a concern that the citizen is misled or manipulated by the political performances in the public sphere, which implies a simplistic hypodermic needle approach to the relationship between a political performance and its audience. This review of ideas from performance theory and Audience Studies destabilises the idea that 'seeing is believing'. The metaphor of politics-as-performance suggests that the citizen does not passively watch political actors but interprets them in light of personal, cultural and social contexts.⁸

In Political Science, Murray Edelman has written eloquently on this matter as he highlights the importance of symbolism in his classic text *The*

⁸ This idea is supported in political science literature as well, in particular on the limited relevance of election campaigns to voting preferences. Lazarsfeld et al's study *The People's Choice: how the voter makes up his mind in a presidential campaign* is a case in point. (Lazarsfeld et al., 1948).

Symbolic Uses of Politics (Edelman, 1985). He conceptualises the political process in two ways, both as a “spectator sport” and as an activity where organised groups bargain for tangible benefits. He goes on, continuing with the metaphor of politics-as-performance, to suggest that “for these spectators of politics, the more dramatic and publicised features of the political process convey reassurance but they can do so only because people are ambivalent and anxious for reassurance....The acting out in formal, adversary hearings of the ambivalence that springs from men’s conflicting interests and perceptions legitimises the decisions flowing from these dramatic forms” (Edelman, 1985: 189). For Edelman then there are direct links between political performance, its interactive relationship with the audience and the legitimate use of political power. His work is a strong influence on this thesis and I return to it throughout the empirical chapters. My point of departure from his work is that where for Edelman symbolism is analysed in the context of language, by focusing on the metaphor of politics-as-performance I am exploring the lived experience of these symbols as they are enacted. This takes into account the physicality of speaking and space and thus develops a richer description.

Continuing for now with this theme of audience interaction with political performance, we might agree that the audience is more obviously connected and interactive with a political performance than audiences of cultural performances. This is related to the political power inherent in the relationship between political actor and citizen. In the context of deliberative democracy, in order to transform the preferences of the citizen, the political actor first requires the citizen to watch their performance. To achieve visibility in the crowded public sphere political actors must therefore adjust the content of their performances accordingly in a way that not only appeals

to a particular audience (or more likely audiences) but that takes account of the demands of a mediatised environment. So in a sense the requirement of an audience sets the terms of the performance, especially when the audience members are deliberators in their own right. This fundamental interactive link to an audience would suggest a bottom-up approach to the deliberative relationship where citizens are empowered by their spectatorship role as well as their possibility of enacting counter performances.

Moreover, returning again to Edelman, the aim of a conventional political performance is that 'the political leader's gestures dramatizing his ability to cope with the threats the public fears win him the following he needs' (1985: 190). 'Winning' in political terms means a specific re-action, or indeed counter-performance, on the part of the audience. In both deliberative and representative contexts, political action is required from the citizen, from the practicalities of donating campaign funding or resources to the more structural actions to maintain democracy such as voting or direct action. However, as I suggest in the empirical chapters, political performances can be appropriated or subverted by counter-performances of citizens as well as supported by them. In this way, then, the audience members of a political performance are more than spectators. They are, to borrow Boal's term, 'spect-actors' who help to shape and re-mould political 'reality' through their counter-performances (1979).

To conclude this discussion on the role of the audience, in this thesis I adopt the conception of audience members as an interpreter of lived experience and argue that they are more than just passive spectators who accept the authorial intent of the performers. Rather they are active co-creators of the performance's meaning. I focus primarily on describing the lived experience of the performance because I feel that whilst structural

linguistic approaches are useful, they fail to take account of the physicality of performance and the range of sensory experiences that performances invoke. Rather than viewing them as conflicting, I hope that the metaphor of performance goes some way to bridging a gap between these language-based approaches and the embodied practice of politics. As such, I situate the performances in question within a socio-historical context and offer my own interpretation as I experience them as an audience member.

2.2.2 Being there: Authenticity and the live

Whilst I have discussed the role of the audience, I have not really expanded on who the audience is, other than remembering Schechner's definition as 'those in the presence of' performance. However, this definition is more telling about performance theory than it would first appear because it makes the assumption that the performance is live and that the audience is those people who are sharing the same space and time as the performance. Put another way, the audience is physically present and the performance, for them, takes place in the present.

It is no accident that Schechner includes this in his preliminary definition of performance. Throughout the Performance Studies literature there is a subtle privileging of the 'live' as the defining feature of authentic performance, which is perhaps where the critiques of Performance Studies as reactionary to the highly representational and mediatised nature of postmodernity originate.⁹ On reflection, privileging live performance appears to be intuitively persuasive. The first person experience of watching

⁹ An excellent review of these ideas in greater depth can be found in Schechner's introduction to *Performance Studies* (2002) and in Auslander's book on *Liveness* (1999).

a live performance mimics the way that we experience life in general, which is being present and in the present. Even if performance is not 'real' life, it is still subject to the same limitations of time and space in real life and, as such, the experience feels more transparent and 'real'.

Consider the experience of watching a live theatre production compared with watching the same story in the format of a film. One might argue that even though they are both fictional stories, the process of mediatisation alters the aesthetic experience of the performance because it means that the performers are able to hide the signs that it is a performance. Without the confines of time and space in the live performance, the mediatised performance can create a fictional reality that seems more real to the audience (through, for example, special effects, close-ups of facial expressions or fractured timelines). Yet, paradoxically, the mediatised performance is less real as a comparison to the perceptual freedom that 'live' provides. Moreover, mediatisation adds another layer of abstraction between audience and performance. One might argue that only the live performance remains true to the authorial intent of the performers and allows for a direct, 'unbiased' relationship with the audience. I explore these ideas in the coming chapters as they relate to the experiential aspects of my research.

These ideas surrounding the privileging of the live have been defended by Peggy Phelan in her book *Unmarked: the politics of performance* (1993). In it she makes a passionate case that performance is "representation without reproduction" by which she means that "performance's only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations....Performance's being[...]becomes itself through

disappearance" (Phelan, 1993: 146). Her ideas need to be unpacked further to understand her meaning. She argues that all performances, because they are performed live in front of a specific group of people and at a specific time, cannot be reproduced or copied in the way that, for example, images or texts can. The reason is that the interactive, phenomenological experience that the audience members have with the performers in any specific performance cannot be repeated or copied. In this way, then, performance only exists in so far as it is remembered and performances are acts of disappearance because they disappear into memory as soon as they occur. Put another way, 'being there' is irreducible.

This links into the discussion of the role of the audience. Phelan agrees that representation produces an excess of meaning "that makes multiple and resistant readings possible". But despite this excess, as I discussed in Part 1 of this chapter, "it fails to reproduce the real exactly" (Phelan, 1993: 2). Her wider project is to sidestep the fruitless quest for the authentic Real-real if "the real is read through the represented, and the represented is read through the real" (Phelan, 1993: 2) and to locate value in that which is not visibly representable. In doing so she attempts to generate "a theory of value for that which is not 'really there', that which cannot be surveyed within the boundaries of the putative real" (Phelan, 1993: 1). Linked to this, she feels that the disappearing ontology of performance has strong political potential because it is independent from the reproductive economy, the means by which artefacts are reproduced, and the technological and financial power struggles that come with it.

To do justice to Phelan's ideas on a subjectivity based outside visible representation would probably require another very different thesis, as would relating them in detail to the political sphere. However reflecting on

them briefly is illuminating because it makes us consider to what extent political performances are (or ought to be) beyond reproduction and, by extension, where the boundaries of the metaphor of politics-as-performance are located.

Whilst the visible public practice remains the focus of my formulation of the metaphor of politics-as-performance, the influence of Phelan's work on my approach has been to highlight that visibility is not the only area for concern with performance. Her work shows that attention must be given to how performances decay and evolve after the 'present' of the performance time. As we shall see in the empirical chapters, applying these ideas to the political sphere highlights the role of memory of previous performances in generating political representations.

More generally, by passionately defending the live performance as beyond reproduction, Phelan's perspective implies a conceptual break between the live and the mediatised versions of performances - for her a recording of a performance is simply something else, but not a performance. On reflection, the feeling that there may be a conceptual difference between the live and the mediatised is echoed in concerns about the form of political information. Often the critique of politics-as-performance, as we observed in the introductory chapter, is based on a concern that mediatisation has adversely transformed the political process, that it has reduced the political actor to the level of an infinitely reproducible representation in, to use Phelan's terms, the arena of "representations of representations" (1993: 146). The metaphor of politics-as-performance encourages us to focus on the live performance and consider this argument within the frame of the lived experience of politics. In doing so, it provides a platform of comparison

between live and mediatised public practices rather than just focusing on the mediatised versions of politics.

Moreover, as I develop further in the empirical chapters, ‘the live performance’ is similarly privileged in the political sphere. Edelman makes this point well when he argues that the symbolic use of space, the “accenting of settings”, is just as politically relevant as the actions of the political actors. He notes that “great pains are taken to call attention to settings and to present them conspicuously as if the scenes were expected either to call forth a response of its own or to heighten the response to the act it frames” (Edelman, 1985: 95). Here we see that it is not enough that actions are performed, they must be performed in a particular space and we might also add to this that they must be performed at a particular time. Actions such as parliamentary debates, voting on policy or even a protest march or terrorist attack require the political actor to be physically present at certain times and places, often with the specific purpose of performing the action in front of a particular live audience. The metaphor of politics-as-performance is particularly useful in highlighting the importance of ‘being there’ in politics and considering how this is symbolically relevant in political information. For this reason I analyse both mediatised and ‘live’ performances in this thesis to address both aspects of this debate in my work.

2.2.3 Mediatised performance: Reproduction and remediation

However, continuing with the theme of considering possible audiences, we can appreciate that being present at a performance, sharing the same space and time is not the only way to experience it. Whilst Phelan is adamant that

non-live performances are not in fact performances, reflexive public practices that seem to follow the definition of performance are constantly reproduced through mediation and as such are capable of being experienced by other audiences, albeit in a different way. Indeed, this privileging of the live in Performance Studies has its detractors both in the disciplines of Media and Cultural Studies and within Performance Studies itself.

Philip Auslander provides a powerful rejoinder to Phelan and indeed other theorists who privilege live performance and treat it as oppositional to mediatised performance by “recourse to clichés and mystifications about aura, presence, the ‘magic of live theatre’ etc.” in his book *Liveness* (1999: 55). Rather than conceptualising the ‘living arts’ as those which are outside the boundaries of reproduction in some other, more authentic, cultural system, he argues that all performances are “mediatised”. Following Jameson’s and indeed Baudrillard’s use of the term, he argues that performances “are forced by economic reality to acknowledge their status as media within a mediatic system that includes the mass media and information technologies” (Auslander, 1999: 6). Of course, an underlying assumption contained within the idea of a mediatic system is that television and other technologies of reproduction do not only provide outlets for cultural forms, they simply are *the* dominant cultural landscape. Here again we might consider that this echoes the criticisms of politics-as-performance that were mentioned in the introductory chapter - that the real and the authentic in politics have been detrimentally transformed by mediatisation and political actors are similarly ‘forced’ by that same economic reality into a contrived, unreal representation.

However, Auslander offers an interesting response to this problem that we can apply to politics through the metaphor of politics-as-performance.

He argues that the idea that the live is sequentially 'first' and thus more authentic or more real than the mediated is mistaken. For Auslander, the differences between them are not intrinsic or ontologically significant but rather are differences of position within the cultural economy. He goes on to offer a historical view of the role of different media, noting that television in its capacity for immediacy can have a similar ontology of 'disappearance' as Phelan outlined above and that live theatre can similarly be used as a mass medium (Auslander, 1999: 51).

Here Auslander makes use of Bolter and Grusin's concept of 'remediation'. In their book *Remediation* (2000), Bolter and Grusin make a persuasive argument that new technologies of reproduction and indeed representation achieve their cultural position by refashioning old media using twin strategies of transparent immediacy (denying the presence of the medium) and hypermediacy (making the audience aware of the medium). The result is a system of remediations where different mediums are represented in each other. Auslander traces this process of remediation between live performance and performance through other mediums and concludes that just as "mediated performance derived its authority from its reference to the live or the real, the live now derives its authority from its reference to the mediated" (1999: 39). More than that, "the very concept of live performance presupposes that of reproduction" – that the live can exist only *within* an economy of reproduction because the 'live' does not make sense without a comparative reference to the mediated (Auslander, 1999: 39-54).

The usefulness of Auslander's approach is that it destabilises the idea that live performances ought to be treated as ontologically different to the mediated versions and also encourages us to consider the material

conditions of the practice of performance within the wider cultural economy. To a large extent I find his arguments persuasive and so throughout this thesis I conceive of performance as reproducible in various forms and I explore the issue of remediation in both live and mediated political performance I analyse. Rather than looking at these mediated performances as merely images, I still view them as practices and describe them as such.

If we accept that performance can be remediated then this exponentially widens the criteria for audience-membership as it includes anyone who can perceive the performance as “circulated on television, as audio or visual recordings, and in other forms based in technologies of reproduction” (Auslander, 1999: 5). This has a democratising effect in the sense that the audience is no longer conceived of as the elite group who are physically present. It also amplifies the performance’s potential for political power as the representations of reality it generates are more wide-reaching and saturating.

Edelman makes this point as well in the opening paragraphs of *The Symbolic Uses of Politics* when he says: “for most men most of the time politics is a series of pictures in the mind placed there by television news, newspapers, magazines and discussions. The pictures create a moving panorama taking place in a world the mass public never quite touches....Politics is for most of us a passing parade of abstract symbols” (Edelman, 1985: 5).

There are a number of points to draw out here. First, as Edelman points out, for the majority of citizens the political sphere is experienced at a distance – as he goes on to say later, “politics is a spectacle reported to the

public from a remote arena" (1996: 62). Put another way, for the majority of citizens, the lived experience of politics is in this highly mediated form of representation rather than a rational surveying of the political reality. Here we see that there is a gap between how the citizen experiences politics and the demands of deliberative theory. I hope that the metaphor of politics-as-performance goes some way to offering a description of this 'parade' as it is experienced and highlighting the problem of this gap.

Linked to this, critiques of a mediated spectacular politics as inauthentic bring us back to the issue of political reality and political representation. Applying the metaphor of politics-as-performance we might consider what authentic, un-mediated, 'live' politics actually is. As I discussed in the introductory chapter, political representation involves a level of abstraction between the representative and those represented. Legitimacy is maintained through demonstrably emphasising the link between them. In the course of publically demonstrating representation, politics is remediated in many forms – policy cannot be made or enacted without being seen in the form of abstract representations, from the practice of drafting a policy document, to delivering press briefings and public consultations. Perhaps, following Auslander's arguments about performance, politics cannot exist except within an economy of reproduction because of the abstraction that both representative and deliberative democracy require.

Finally, most citizens experience politics in this abstract, mediated form. As such, their relationship to the political as one of perception. This prompts reflection on its many similarities to the audience-performance relationship that I have been exploring in this chapter. As my discussion of the role of the audience has suggested, we need to situate citizens' reception of politics within the wider cultural context of their other perceptions. Edelman takes

this idea to its logical conclusion in a later book and argues that artistic creations shape conceptions of politics because, “perception springs from prognosis, leaving ample opportunity for imagination” (1996: 16). The point here is that the political audience does not necessarily separate their perceptions of politics from other ones and so the crossover between politics and culture is a natural consequence of the audience-citizen’s perception. I explore these ideas as well as how different cultural forms are remediated in politics in the empirical chapters and show that describing politics-as-performance is a useful tool to begin to theorise the citizen in this way.

2.3.1 Conceptual framework: Performance, Representation and Deliberation

Throughout this chapter I have outlined three main concepts that feature prominently in the activity of performance; representation, transformation and interaction. Exploring these ideas through the lens of performance theory has destabilised a number of dichotomies that are often taken for granted. The dynamics between reality and representation, between the live and the mediated, and between the audience and the performer are all more complex than they would first appear. Put together, this overview of performance theory describes a complex and multi-directional relationship between the performer, who is engaged in the practice of ‘showing doing,’ and the audience, who is watching or, more correctly, spect-acting.

This dynamic of reflexive public practice is a central connection between the concepts of politics and performance. As I argue throughout this thesis, applying the framing device of the metaphor of politics-as-performance focuses on and problematises the relationship between the political actor and the watching citizen in the public sphere. However, the metaphor of politics-as-performance is not merely an interesting turn of phrase. I argue that it

delivers a conceptual framework that offers a new way of thinking about politics, specifically about the lived experience of deliberation. For the remainder of this chapter I outline this conceptual possibility by expanding on the relationship between performance, representation and deliberation.

Performance is concerned with generating a representation and prompts reflection about the relationship between that representation and the 'reality' it purports to represent. Generating a representation is also a feature of what political actors do in the practice of political representation. In parliament, on the campaign trail and even in the less conventional political events such as a protest or a terrorist attack, political actors 'represent' by publicly demonstrating their ability to re-present reality in the public sphere, both in terms of their own political beliefs, and also those of their audience. This demonstration, this reflexive public practice of political representation, is manifest through performances in the public sphere. Political actors stage performances that demand the attention of an audience in the hope that performing their representativeness to the watching audience of citizens will reinforce their authority and legitimacy. Political representation and performance are thus innately linked.

The importance of performance in political representation is highlighted when we consider the status of the political 'reality' that political representations represent. Unlike aesthetic representation where the 'reality' a performance represents is perhaps less controversial, political representation, as I suggest in the introductory chapter of this thesis, is not an afterword to political reality but rather constitutes it. Put another way, the objective sense in which one person is representative, or one political representation is more real than another, is highly contested in politics because it is difficult to identify political reality outside of representation.

This has two implications for the metaphor of politics-as-performance. First, the representations that political actors enact construct political reality. The relationship between performance and politics, then, is not just a feature of the way we talk politics but rather it is the basis of the activity of political representation and political reality. Second, it identifies these performances of political representation as a priority worthy of further research and analysis. The metaphorical device brings with it the means to explore and analyse these performances in a structured and rigorous manner that takes account of the complexity about the performing/spect-acting relationship.

If performance is an important concept in politics because it provides the basis of political representation and the creation of political reality, it is made all the more important because it is also transformative. As I have suggested in this chapter, performance is not just concerned with re-presenting an unbiased copy of the world. Performance also has the ability to construct, change and create alternatives to this world by offering a tangible representation of 'what if' and encouraging the audience to act. This, again, is a feature of what political actors do when they stage their political representations. The reflexive public practice of political representation changes the world, and not just because citizens vote for certain representatives, but because of the wider deliberative context in which these representations take place.

The central tenet of deliberative democracy is that the political system is transformed from within through deliberative processes taking place in the public sphere. Rather than focusing on the process of deliberation as an exchange of reasons which, as I suggested in the introduction to this thesis, is a very narrow definition, the metaphor of politics-as-performance offers an alternative conceptualisation of deliberation as an exchange of

representations, of performances that have a transformative effect on the audience. In this thesis I argue that thinking about deliberation as an exchange of representations offers a textured, contextual account of deliberation as it is experienced and moves beyond the normative judgements surrounding the mixing of politics and popular culture.

The interactivity of performance and audience that I have explored throughout this chapter adds another dimension to this idea. The metaphor of politics-as-performance does not relegate the citizen to the level of a passive spectator, as the critiques of a performance-based politics might at first suggest. Rather, the performative process of deliberation offers transformative possibilities to the spectators of politics, allowing them to become spect-actors. Citizens can interact with the political process directly and on their own terms where their spect-actorship becomes an empowering way of co-creating political reality. Citizens can enact their own representations, which become part of the process of deliberation in the public sphere. Performance, then, through its role in this performative process of deliberation, offers an inclusive and participatory way of understanding of politics and the role of the citizen within it.

It is pertinent to reflect here on the relationship between representation and deliberation. I argue that performance is where these two concepts meet in so far as deliberation is performative and composed of an exchange of representations. However, as the empirical cases show, there are tensions within this relationship. These tensions are centred around the theoretical conflict between the representational and the participatory aspects of performance.

Coming back to the argument outlined at the start of this chapter, the very basis of a performance, even before it is transformative, is that it requires an audience. This status of needing to be seen in this busy public sphere of competing representations can be at odds with offering a transformative and interactive role for the spec-actors. Put another way, the method of gaining an audience can conflict with the type of opportunities offered for audience interaction. This means that the nature the representations in the public sphere can have an effect on the dynamic of deliberation that is produced. Looking at the empirical cases shows that the levels of interaction offered for citizen-spectators is not always equal. The aims of generating a representation that demands an audience often compete with the interactive aims of participating in an inclusive deliberative context where all representations are exchanged on an equal footing. This subtle conflict is what the metaphor of politics-as-performance highlights and frames for analysis.

2.3.2 Metaphor and setting the research agenda

Given the conceptual framework outlined above, it is clear that researching the role of performance in politics is a research priority. I have argued that performance is at the heart of the deliberative process that transforms the public sphere and constructs political reality. The complexity of the relationship between representation, deliberation and performance warrants further analysis as to its potential to offer a new understanding of deliberation and its application in the public sphere.

However, whilst this conceptual framework between performance, representation and deliberation supplies a backdrop to this thesis, the concept of performance is not confined to the theoretical. In fact, as I suggest

above, you cannot think a performance, you must enact it and this has implications for any research strategy. Performance, with its focus on the lived experiences of both spect-acting and reflexive public practice, is properly the realm of empirical, experiential analysis. The metaphor of politics-as-performance provides a clear route forwards in this regard by offering a way of conceiving of politics as performance in an empirical setting.

The metaphor of politics-as-performance in this thesis thus acts both as a resource for the political scientist and as a topic in itself. The framing device of the metaphor puts the conceptual framework between performance, representation and deliberation in sharp relief. In this way, it is a topic that focuses on representation and deliberation as practices and describes the lived experience of what political actors do in generating political representation. It shows us that reflexive public practice, of scripting and planning and acting, are actually intrinsic features of our political process, rather than an unfortunate or trivial sideshow that critiques of performance-based politics might suggest.

However, the metaphor is also a resource for political scientists. It acts as a vehicle for bringing the theories, concepts and research strategies of Performance Studies to the discipline of Political Science. In particular it offers a way of analysing political representation and performed deliberation as it is experienced in the political sphere in a structured and rigorous manner. In the following chapter, I explicate this research process and outline my research strategy for generating a thick description of the metaphor that accounts for these strengths.

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have highlighted some key areas within the wide and varied discipline of Performance Studies and suggested where the concepts of politics and performance overlap. I argue that the metaphor of politics-as-performance develops central linkages between performance theory and deliberative democracy by conceptualising the relationship between the representative and the citizen as similar to that between audience and spectator. This theme is developed in the empirical chapters as I use performance analysis as a useful tool to describe this relationship. In this way, this thesis makes a significant contribution to understandings of deliberative democracy that conceptualises deliberation as a performative exchange of representations. Throughout this chapter I have drawn out three main debates surrounding the concept of performance that are resonant in each of the empirical cases.

First, the concept of performance destabilises the idea of a dichotomy between reality and representation. Conceptualising performance as a form of reflexive public practice, a way of 'showing doing', I have argued that during a performance the performer's actions stand in a representative relationship to 'real life' that both copies and reconstructs that experience. As such, using the metaphor of politics-as-performance frames the representative relationship between citizen and representative not as a simple process of copying political reality but a more aesthetic process of construction. The tools of Performance Studies, as I argue over the course of this thesis, are helpful in describing and understanding political representation in a way that moves it beyond the dichotomy between what is 'real' and not real. Throughout the empirical case studies, this is manifested

in terms of the political representative being seen to perform certain actions in the visible public sphere.

Secondly, I explored the idea of a similar dichotomy between the live and the mediated in the context of performance. Exploring the issue through the lens of Peggy Phelan's work was particularly useful in highlighting the role of the 'live' in the political sphere. However, following Auslander, I argued that the distinction between live and mediated performance is not as stable as it would seem. Like the distinction between reality and representation, the concept of 'live' performance implies and is relational to the mediated because one cannot exist without the idea of the other. In the rest of this thesis I argue that the metaphor of politics-as-performance applies these ideas to the political sphere and allows us to understand the ways in which live and mediated performances mediate each other.

Thirdly, throughout this chapter I have described the activity of performing as intrinsically related to the activity of spectating in that performance is concerned with 'showing doing' to an audience. Rather than conceiving of the audience as a separate and passive group, by drawing on Performance Studies and Audience Studies I have argued that the relationship between performance and audience is a process of interaction that is transformative for both. Applying the metaphor of politics-as-performance thus focuses on the relationship between the citizen and the representative as interactive and similarly transformative in the context of political participation and deliberation. The audience members are not just passive spectators but spect-actors engaged in the deliberative process. As I suggest in my discussion of the case studies, however, the control over this process and the amount of audience interaction that a performance accommodates varies amongst political actors according to the performance

staging techniques that they employ. The metaphor thus identifies a tension between the representative and participatory elements of performance in the process of deliberation.

Chapter 3:

Researching Politics-as-Performance; Metaphor, Research and Performance Analysis

The metaphor of politics-as-performance exists in the everyday discourse surrounding the political sphere, from academic to journalistic accounts, the words we use to describe politics often involve some reference to performances, spectacles, stages or actors. In the previous chapter, I developed the concept of performance in greater depth and noted many areas of similarity between the practice of performance and that of politics. This would perhaps account for the prevalence of the metaphor in everyday language. However, moving from using it as a casual description of the political to operationalising the metaphor for research requires further explanation, both in terms of the epistemological issue of metaphor's relationship to knowledge, and indeed the practicalities of research design.

In this chapter I explore these issues in turn, considering to what extent metaphor can be a useful tool for political enquiry. Looking at the properties of metaphor as a vehicle for interpretive understanding, I outline the latent epistemological assumptions within this thesis and revisit the research aims within this context. Then I turn to the practical issues of operationalising the particular metaphor of politics-as-performance, noting some difficulties that this poses both in the design and execution of the research. In addition to the theoretical contribution that performance can make to the political sphere, the metaphor allows us to apply the tools of performance analysis to describe political representation as it is practiced in the visible public sphere. To that end I outline my own methodology used for this research, which builds on

similar methods of researching metaphor by using the techniques of performance analysis.

3.1 Metaphor

Before exploring the use of metaphor in political enquiry, it is appropriate to expand on the concept of metaphor in greater detail. In simple terms, metaphor is a figure of speech that compares two objects or ideas by calling one by the name of the other. It is perhaps more commonly associated with, and recognised in, creative literature such as, to use an apt and already quoted Shakespearean example, “All the world’s a stage, And all the men and women merely players”.¹⁰ But on reflection it is used in everyday language as well, as exemplified in expressions like ‘political showmanship’, ‘boiling with rage’ or even concepts like ‘inflation’. Following Dvora Yanow’s useful definition, we might start by suggesting that metaphor is commonly understood as “the juxtaposition of two superficially unlike elements [known as the ‘vehicle’ and the ‘focus’] in a single context, where separately understood meanings of both interact to create a new perception of the focus” (Yanow, 1996: 132). So, in the metaphor of politics-as-performance, performance is the vehicle that is transferred over to create a new perception of politics.

It is clear from this definition that metaphor involves the transference not just of words but also of meanings from one context to another. Metaphor is at its most useful when the vehicle is a better-known context whose wealth of

¹⁰ **Shakespeare; As You Like it:** Act II, Scene VII, lines 139-166. (Shakespeare et al., 1978)

meaning and understanding is transferred onto a lesser-known focus. For example, if one were to describe Tony Blair as a political showman, the familiar meaning of skilled performance expressed in the vehicle of 'showman' is transferred onto the lesser-known context of experiencing Blair's presentational style. Thus, the metaphor has provided a greater insight into the focus.

Immediately the concept of metaphor provides an interesting view of experiential knowledge that is directly relevant to social research - metaphors are a series of overlapping spheres of meaning that we use to gain understandings of unfamiliar situations. As such, they are more than just figures of speech, they are "figures of thought" in that they influence both perception of the world and action within it (Lakoff, 1986). Lakoff and Johnson, in their book *Metaphors We Live By* (1980), make this point well and later argue that "metaphor is not a harmless exercise in naming. It is one of the principal means by which we understand our experience...[It] plays a role in the creation of reality" (Lakoff and Johnson, 1987: 79). That is to say that the unfamiliar reality we experience is understood and constructed by framing it in the context of meaning that a metaphor provides. As such, in the context of social research, we might view metaphors not just as descriptions of the social world but as models that shape it.

It is important to note that metaphorical meaning is transferred and understood in a particular way. To say that 'politics is performance' metaphorically is not necessarily to say that politics is literally performance. It is, following Richard Brown's excellent treatment of the topic, a "literal absurdity...and a self-conscious 'as if'" that can be played twice, once in terms of what the self-conscious 'as if' shows and once in terms of what it does not (Brown, 1977: 79-88). As such, it requires a special understanding

and the “indulgence of all concerned” in order to function as a metaphor rather than collapse into a simple case of category error (Manning, 1991: 78).

This leads us to consider the basis upon which meaning is transferred within the context of a metaphor. The intuitive answer is that the meaning is transferred via the similarities of each element that allow us to make that cognitive association between the two. The politics-as-performance metaphor exists because on some level politics is similar to performance as I have suggested in the previous chapter. However, as Paine notes, metaphor “resembles similarity, it is partial similarity but it is not similarity itself” (Paine, 1981: 188). The strength of metaphor lies in its ability to frame the interaction of the two concepts. In doing so it can uncover subtle similarities that were previously hidden but at the same time hide fundamental differences that were previously overwhelming – it is thus both enabling and limiting (Yanow, 1996: 133).

To summarise, metaphor is a context-sensitive concept. For it to make sense specific meanings must not only be capable of being transferred but they must be transferred in a particular way and with complicit understanding of those involved. As such metaphors, like performances, are polysemic and multi-vocal in that they can have many interpretations and meanings, both reinforcing and subversive, and there is no necessary and binary relationship in the process of transference. Describing a metaphor, then, is not a process of description-as-reportage of how the metaphor is used, or indeed of reporting the authorial intent of the speaker who uses the metaphor, but rather a creative process of construction of meaningfulness by describing it in context.

3.2 Metaphor and political enquiry

The role of metaphor in political enquiry has been made somewhat controversial by the classical political theorist Thomas Hobbes who felt that “reasoning upon them [metaphors] is wandering amongst innumerable absurdities and their end, contention and sedition, or contempt” (Hobbes and Plamenatz, 1962). It is true that, as Derrida has noted, “metaphor orients research and fixes results” (quoted in Manning, 1991: 72). However, as Miller points out, Hobbes nevertheless felt motivated to exploit the metaphor of a Leviathan in the title to his major work (Miller, 1979: 155).

This example reflects two possibilities for metaphor in political enquiry – either as a feature of the way political theorists represent their work or as the object of the research itself. Throughout this thesis and indeed the research process I have considered the metaphor of politics-as-performance as the object of political enquiry rather than using it to add “embroidery [to] the facts” (Brown, 1977: 79). The metaphor of politics-as-performance does highlight some interesting theoretical ideas about the dynamic between performance, deliberation and representation, and so in this sense the metaphor has become a model within which to represent these theoretical ideas in this final text. However, this would have been impossible without treating the metaphor as the object of research in the first instance, so from the outset this has been the primary aim of this research.

The topic of politics and performance is particularly well-suited to an exploration within a metaphorical context. Whilst, as I suggested in Chapter 2, there are interesting theoretical connections between the concepts of performance, representation and deliberation, researching the idea of

performance requires empirical research in order to appreciate it as an embodied, 'living art'. The use of metaphor is thus an excellent bridging device between these perspectives. It allows us to reinterpret the empirical experience of politics in light of the conceptual framework of performance whilst at the same time appreciating the lived experience of the metaphor in action, of the performed politics as a practice.

In order to treat metaphor as the object of political enquiry there are some epistemological assumptions that need to be made explicit. Throughout the research I have adopted a broadly 'interpretive' epistemological position. Following Berger and Luckman (1967), the interpretive approach makes the assumption that the social world, whilst it is a 'reality', is a socially constructed reality. That is to say that human beings are not only objects of knowledge but knowing subjects that view everything through the subjective phenomenological experience of everyday life. This subjective experience is abstracted or 'objectified' onto a variety of human-made artefacts ranging from materials to practices, from language and signs to performances and created objects, and these form the basis of inter-subjective understanding.

Researching social reality, then, is not the collection of 'brute data' that correspond to the objective, external reality, but rather a process of exploring and describing this inter-subjective, partially-interpreted knowledge. To borrow Blaikie's terminology, this approach uses 'abductive' rather than deductive reasoning (Blaikie, 2000: 98-120). Its aim is to explore and understand the inter-subjective or, as Yanow puts it, 'local' knowledge that is objectified in these artefacts (Yanow, 2000: 26). In proceeding from this interpretive epistemological standpoint, Dvora Yanow's research on metaphor in the context of policy analysis (1996; 2000; 1992) and Clifford

Geertz's (1973) work developing thick description of Bali cockfights have been key inspirations for this thesis.

In her book *How Does a Policy Mean?* (1996) Yanow explores the supermarket metaphor as an organizing principle for the Israel Corporation for Community Centers. In outlining her research process she reveals that she used many layers of ethnographic data collection to generate her research data; participant observation, reflecting on conversations with individuals, gathering documents and newspaper accounts, taking field notes to record her reflections on the location, and recording the daily happenings of the community centers and their staff. The result is a richly textured interpretive analysis of the community centers that explores the descriptive strength of the 'supermarket' metaphor based around symbolic language, symbolic objects and symbolic acts in the organisation.

In analysing the Community Centers in this way, Yanow provides a powerful case for the use of metaphor as an object of social research. Metaphors, she argues, are not only descriptive of social phenomena but also prescriptive for actions, that as 'figures of thought' they both describe and prescribe actions in a social situation (Yanow, 1992: 6-9). Throughout her research on Community Centers she argues that the supermarket metaphor was a human-made artefact that represented or stood 'in a symbolic relationship to' meaning (Yanow, 1996: 14-15) and as such ordered the way that the participants thought about, and acted within, the Community Centers. Exploring the metaphor further thus delivered an interpretive understanding of policy analysis and implementation in this context.

Following Yanow, I argue that metaphor as a mental construct orders and frames the subjective phenomenological experience. By placing it in the

centre of a situated, descriptive research strategy I am able to access (and, by creating a text, add to) inter-subjective understandings of politics. I consider that using metaphor in this way fully realises its cognitive and emotive potential in that the transference of meaning between the two concepts can be understood within a particular context and their similarities and differences can be compared. Nonetheless, reflecting on the poststructuralist destabilisation of the linear relationship between the signifier and the signified discussed in Chapter 2, it will remain only one possible construction of the metaphor of politics-as-performance. That is, this thesis provides a contextually-situated narrative of the insights that the metaphor of politics-as-performance communicates, rather than an authoritative reading/construction of it.

Having highlighted the wider epistemological assumptions and explored the idea of metaphor, we are now in a position to revisit the primary research aim of this thesis and describe the process of researching a metaphor as one of thick description. I take the concept of thick description from Geertz in his highly influential book *The Interpretation of Cultures* (Geertz, 1973: 3-30). Geertz, in turn, borrowed the idea of thick description from the philosopher Gilbert Ryle who highlights a pertinent illustrative example to make his point in his essay '*The Thinking of Thoughts; what is Le Penseur doing?*' (Ryle, 1971). Consider the example of two boys rapidly contracting the eyelid of their respective right eyes. For one boy it is an involuntary twitch and for the other it is a conspiratorial wink. A thin description is to simply describe the action - that two boys rapidly contracted their eyelids. A thick description is to describe what Geertz categorises as the object of ethnography: "a stratified hierarchy of meaningful structures in terms of which twitches, winks, fake-winks, parodies, rehearsals of parodies, are produced, perceived and

interpreted and without which they would not...in fact exist, no matter what anyone did or didn't do with his eyelids" (Geertz, 1973: 7).

This example is pertinent because it echoes the issues of representation, performance and audience interpretation explored in Chapter 2. We might consider that the second boy's wink is an example of performance, of a reflexive public action set within the context of communicating a message, whereas that of the first boy is not. There is no surprise here as Geertz's wider argument is concerned with the semiotic analysis of culture more generally, which includes performances.

Geertz goes on to locate the role of the social scientist as an ethnographer whose primary role is to write. He defines ethnographic thick description as "interpretive of the flow of discourse; and the interpreting involved consists in trying to rescue the 'said' of such discourse from its perishing occasions and fix it in perusable terms" (Geertz, 1973: 20). Here again we see echoes of the concerns of Performance Studies, with a desire to record or categorise that which sinks into disappearance through lived experience. This thesis is certainly concerned with writing the metaphor of politics-as-performance as much as conceptualising it. Such a process, I suggest, is one of construction or generation as well as recording.

Applying this discussion to the issue at hand more generally, generating a thick description of the metaphor of politics-as-performance is to describe it in context of the cultural 'web of symbols' that inter-subjective experience provides. In aiming to provide a thick description of politics-as-performance I therefore describe the performance actions of the political actor as they are located within a symbolic context. I consider both what and 'how' these actions mean. However, I build upon the methodological strategies of

Yanow and Geertz by also integrating the methodology of performance analysis in this research.

3.3 Researching politics-as-performance: introducing performance analysis

Having looked at some of the epistemological assumptions surrounding the idea of using metaphor and its role in political enquiry, the question still remains as to the practical issue of researching politics-as-performance.

As I have already suggested, my approach is broadly interpretative and my aim is to provide a thick description of the metaphor. As such the natural methodological choice was to engage primarily in ethnographic participant-observation because it allowed me to experience metaphor in context and gather a wealth of data within the context of each case. Depending on the format of the performance, this meant becoming a member of the live audience and interacting with the performers (such as in the Faslane case study), or experiencing the mediated performances in various forms (as was the case for the London 7/7 Bombings case and the Blair/Brown case), or indeed a mixture of live and mediated (as in the SNP case). As I have suggested in Chapter 2, whilst these live and mediated performances offered different experiences, I did not conceive of them as dichotomous categories of the live and its mediated copy, rather as different experiences of performance.

However the process of applying the metaphor requires further consideration. I argue that the metaphor of politics 'as' performance does not merely encourage us to describe politics according to the terms and structures of performance (for example, designating who the audience is,

who the key actors are and so on...) but to analyse it as a performance. As such, my research strategy for applying the metaphor was to break it down into frames in order to consider the similarity that the vehicle of the metaphor provided, and then to analyse them using the tools of performance analysis.

Before going on to describe the data collection and case studies in greater detail, it is first necessary to explore the concept of performance analysis in order to draw out some general principles and methodological strategies. As we saw in the previous chapter, the issue of watching a performance is complex and the problems of subjectivity, disappearance and mediatization are also relevant to the performance analyst and the research design of this project.

3.3.1 Dramaturgic analysis

A popular template for analysing performances is provided in the form of dramaturgic analysis. As performance theorist Patrice Pavis points out, dramaturgic analysis is simply the spectator's description of a theatrical performance. "Description is usually layered on top of telling the story (plot or *fabula*), or at least the narration of the most remarkable events on stage; this facilitates a broad overview of the materials used, a natural segmentation of the performance and a highlighting of potent moments from the *mise-en-scene*" (Pavis, 2003: 7). *Mise-en-scene* is a complex term to define but for our present purposes we might describe it as the staging, or the stylistic features of the production that enable it to move from text to stage (or indeed film) such as the setting, lighting, props and costumes.

This process of describing the mise-en-scene as a means of performance analysis has many proponents in theatre studies, especially as it was developed through Bertold Brecht's dramaturgy (see Jameson, 1998). Its strength is that it encourages the analyst to reflect on their experience of the performance as a whole as well as examining its parts. It also allows the analyst to look beyond the action and plot (if there is one) and observe the context in which action takes place. In this way it would be very useful to explore the metaphor of politics-as-performance because not only does it comply with traditional notions of cultural performance in its application of the theatrical categories (and so perhaps matches more closely with lay uses of the metaphor of politics-as-performance) but it also would allow me to look at the staging of political action. Given the varying contexts in which political actions take place, this is a key strength.

Dramaturgy has become a sociological paradigm, as exemplified in Goffman's work and also that of Brisset and Edgley's *Life as Theater* (Goffman, 1973; Brissett and Edgley, 1974). Dramaturgical analysis in these contexts has been used successfully to describe the social roles that human beings act out. Proponents of this approach forward a conception of the self that is not fixed but created and re-created through the process of performing. The fact that there is precedent for its use in social science would suggest that dramaturgical analysis would be a good strategy for the research process.

However, there are some limitations in using dramaturgical analysis within this research project. First, its origins in theatrical performance mean that it is limited in its outlook and application. For example, the focus on drama, traditional narrative and the designation of individual roles in dramaturgical analysis presupposes these as important features of a

performance. As I suggest throughout the empirical chapters, this is not necessarily the case. Secondly, dramaturgical analysis implies a self-contained system such as that of theatrical performances where everyone has to be assigned roles and there is a clear separation between on- and off-stage. Whilst this makes it ideal for describing ‘total institutions’ as in Goffman’s work, it is more difficult to do in the context of the highly diffuse and mediatised public sphere where there are many audiences, many stages and singular roles are often difficult to identify. Finally, there is the issue of meaning. Dramaturgical analysis is an excellent way to describe the mise-en-scene but, in its traditional formulation, fails to take account properly of the systems of meaning and symbols within which the action and setting take place. As Pavis notes, the analyst is motivated to “suggest some general hypotheses on the ways in which a mise-en-scene functions rather than providing exhaustive and so-called objective descriptions of the heterogeneous aspects of performance” (Pavis, 2003: 9).

3.3.2 The semiotic approach to performance, and its limits

This leads us neatly to another influential approach to performance analysis, which we might loosely call the semiotic approach. As its name suggests this is an approach inspired by the linguistic strategy of semiology that treats the mise-en-scene not as “an empirical object but as an abstract system, an organised ensemble of signs” (Pavis, 2003: 10). Put simply, it treats the performance as a text or as a textual practice and applies the tools of semiotic analysis to decode and disentangle this system.

This approach has been particularly influential for analysis of televisual performances, as Stuart Hall's work has shown (1973). Hall's theory of encoding and decoding conceptualises the relationship between performance and performers as communicative in that encoded messages, sent by authors of the performance text, can then be decoded by the viewer. This is certainly relevant to the role, form and content of political information as it is often conceptualised in terms of political 'communications' and the audience-reception is conceived of in this way.

As a strategy for performance analysis, the semiotic approach is structural, focusing on one system of signs within the performance and building the analysis from there. It differs from dramaturgic analysis in its desire to view the performance within the wider social context. More procedurally, it does not follow the line of the performance's narrative but rather represents a choice on the part of the researcher as to the most important system of signs she sees. As a result, rather than sequentially describing the *mise-en-scene* in the categories of, for example, space, props and actors, the semiotic approach would start with an analysis of the actor as a symbolically resonant form and develop the analysis from there.

However, treating the performance as a text and an encoded communicative act poses some problems. As I have suggested in the previous chapter, viewing a performance as a text seems to leave out the lived experience of performance. Pavis elaborates that "even if these practices are based on the signified/signifier opposition, they cannot be reduced into a grid in which non-linguistic signifiers are automatically translated into linguistic signifieds" (Pavis, 2003: 13-14). This desire to appreciate the 'pre-linguistic' response to performance, the sensations

viewers have in the moment of perceiving a performance, would seem to be a relevant part of performance analysis.

Another critique of the semiotic analysis of performance is that it does not consider the performance as a whole but reduces it into a series of signs and signifiers. This is perhaps a criticism that is pertinent to the current practices of researching the visual more generally (Emmison and Smith, 2000: 107), which is that the analyst tends to fragment the performance into images or even smaller linguistic parts which are then semiotically analysed rather than appreciating the whole of the performance. This is contrary to the lived experience of perceiving performance which is, as the phenomenological rejoinder would remind us, global not fragmented. As Merlau-Ponty suggests, it is difficult to decompose perception because the “whole is prior to the parts” (quoted in Pavis, 2003: 17).

This brings us to a general tension throughout this thesis. The aim of the research is to provide a thick description of the metaphor of politics-as-performance which itself involves the interpretive, language-based assumptions that I mentioned at the start of this chapter and are similar to those that a semiotic approach to performance analysis would require. On the other hand, reflecting on the vehicle of the metaphor has in fact led me to a very different epistemological position centred in phenomenological experience in order to take account of the materiality of performance. As such, the process of writing the metaphor has conflicted my epistemological stance and I have chosen a two-tier research strategy to cope with this.

3.4 Methodology revisited: combining thick description and performance analysis

Following Pavis I argue that “performance as representation should be conceived of in terms both of materiality and potential signification” (Pavis, 2003: 18). As such in order to maintain a focus on the materiality of the performance I engaged in participant observation of each performance, trying in the course of the research to immerse myself in the materiality of the event and absorb the full sensory experience of the performance before reaching to describe it in terms of meaning.

To consider the potential signification of the performances I tried to engage in that process that Pavis calls vectorization. This “consists of associating and connecting signs that form parts of networks, within which each sign only has meaning through the dynamic that relates it to other signs” (Pavis, 2003: 17). He identifies four vectors of analysis within each performance: accumulators, connectors, cutters and shifters. Accumulators function as repetitions of a certain signified or signifier throughout the performance, connectors link groups of signs and organise action, cutters distinguish these groups from one another and shifters “enable a gradual passage from one level of meaning, of from one ‘world’, to another” (Pavis, 2003: 120-121).

It is important to highlight that vectorization is concerned with anticipated potential directions for the material experience, arrows that point to hypotheses, rather than objective outlines. These ‘arrows’ are located within the specific context of the performance. In this way I used these four vectors as mapping devices to start my thick description of the meaning of

the performances, and also of the metaphor of politics-as-performance, without fragmenting the performance element.

3.4.1 Case Selection

This desire to appreciate the materiality and the potential signification of performance influenced the structure of my research. It is for this reason that I adopted a case study method, looking at four different cases as performance events. Following a useful schematic developed by Gomm, Hammersley and Foster we can reflect that the primary concern of the research “is not controlling variables” but rather gathering information “on a large number of features of each case” (Gomm et al., 2000: 4). In the first instance I have sought to appreciate the different manifestations of the metaphor and the dimensions of meaning it provides. As such I decided that the case study method allowed for in-depth, context-situated understanding of the metaphor as applied to lived experience. Moreover, within the frame of the metaphor and the performance analysis, the case study structure allowed me to consider the vectorization of signs and the materiality within the unified context of each performance event.

The selection of the cases prompted reflection about their empirical role in this thesis. Rather than deploying the case studies as experiments or a means to verify a hypothesis, the cases were chosen to act as illustrative examples of the metaphor in practice. They were empirical spaces through which to explore and expand the metaphor of politics-as-performance and further understand the relationship between the political performers and their spectators. I started the research design process by considering types of political event where the relationship between the event and the citizen-

spectator was highlighted. Put simply, my strategy was to explore political events where the metaphor of politics-as-performance resonated clearly. As such, I chose events that included elements of representation, transformation and interaction. Moreover, in order to explore the relationship between political actor and audience in full, the events I chose represented both conventional and unconventional political actors, featured a mix of mediated and less mediated performances, and offered differing levels of audience interaction.

The event types were: a political speech, an election campaign, a protest and a terrorist attack. A speech was chosen because it is an example of the traditional political actor, the official representative, deliberating directly with the citizen. This is useful from a theoretical perspective because it highlights the links between performance, political representation and deliberation in practice. The election campaign similarly shows this relationship but in a more subjunctive way. In an election campaign, the actors are attempting to become officially representative but must engage in deliberation through a series of large and frenetic exchanges of representations in order to achieve this goal. A protest was chosen because it is an alternative form of representation and deliberation that features citizens as political actors and occurs out-with official political representation. This appeared to offer interesting opportunities for performer/audience interactions. Finally, a terrorist attack features a situation where deliberation has to some extent failed as there is no future possibility for an exchange of representations beyond the totality of the terrorist representation. All four events are political spectacles that are staged in the public sphere in order to demand an audience from the citizens.

The specific cases were then chosen based on these types, given the research schedule and their suitability to the criteria of illustrating politics-as-performance. The handover of the Blair premiership to Brown was the ideal political speech case to explore for a number of reasons. First, Blair's personal association with spin and political performance made the metaphor of politics-as-performance resonate clearly as his slick performance style was a common critique of Blair as a political actor at the time. This problematised the relationship of watching Blair and New Labour for the audience highlighted the critique of politics-as-performance as manipulative and trivial. Moreover, the transfer of power was also particularly interesting because this particular performance involved the grand exits and entrances of leaders and their direct interactions with the nation as their audience.

The SNP case was chosen to run parallel with the Blair/Brown handover but offering the perspective of political actors not yet in power and yet still creating representations to deliberate with the citizen audience. Another interesting dynamic of the SNP in particular was the nationalist element that their previous political performance provided. This offered a point of comparison between the alternative nationalism expressed by the Blair/Brown handover at the level of the UK parliament.

The Faslane protest was chosen because of the interesting way that it was organised online and the variety of different groups involved. The Stop the War protest in particular was chosen because of the group's heritage of using theatrical techniques to insert itself into the public sphere. I assumed that this heritage of performance would mean that the metaphor of politics-as-performance resonated particularly well in this case, although as I explore in Chapter 6 this was not necessarily the case. It was also an interesting case because of the relationship between the audience and the protest space. As

this case, along with the SNP, would to a large extent be conducted out-with the confines of capital cities and centres of politics, I was interested in how this would affect the relationship between performance, representation and deliberation.

Finally the 7/7 London bombings were chosen because this particular event was a blighting performance on the British political landscape and formed a key moment in British politics. The drama and spectacle created by this event not only highlighted the role of performance but also was utterly transformative in many ways - for the city, for the victims, for the nation and even on an international stage. Like the Blair/Brown premiership handover, it was a big moment of performance in the national narrative where the citizen audience stopped to watch.

3.4.2 Research Reflections: Data Collection

Each case provided a context through which to explore the metaphor of politics-as-performance. In addition to my participant-observation of the performance events as an audience-member, I also collected documents in my analysis in the interests of viewing the performance in context rather than just the mise-en-scene. Following Balme, it is useful to consider these in two closely linked categories: reception-related and production-related (Balme, 2008: 136-138).

The production-related documents I collected were specific to each performance event. They were the texts, written or unwritten, that could be considered the script and associated outreach or publicity materials, such as press releases, online protest packs and transcriptions of speeches. As we shall see in the empirical chapters, the script and the publicity materials

formed integral parts of the performance events. I was interested to consider how the production-related documents added to the perception of the performance and the system of signs it communicated. Moreover, it was interesting to compare the expected text of a performance to the practice as I experienced it.

The other, more important set of production-related documents I collected was the mediatised performances. These took the form of production images, websites (which I experienced as somewhere between text, image and video) but mostly in the online video format. However, I think that it is a misnomer to call them 'documents'. Following de Marinis (1985), I conceptualised them not as documents that faithfully 'document' the live performance but as monuments in that they are autonomous aesthetic performances in their own right. As such, I analysed them according to the same procedure as the 'live' performances I experienced and within both I looked for remediation of different media. These video performances formed the large bulk of my data collection in each case and the other data was analysed in relation to them.

I also collected reception-related documents, both created by myself and by others. The main source of reception-related documents was generated by my performance notation. I structured the notation process using Pavis's questionnaire which I completed immediately after experiencing the performance (Appendix I). In earlier research trips I also took my own pictures of the performances. However I stopped this as it was adversely fragmenting my experience of the live performance.

The other set of reception-related documents that I collected were those documents made by others. In performance analysis the use of

supplementary documents is quite common for two purposes, both to provide some comparative context for the performance and also to act as a memory aid to the analyst. As such I included reviews of the performances in the media as part of my research design both to provide the context and also to compare the different experiences of the performance. As Balme notes, reviews are important because sometimes strikingly different opinions and readings are articulated. In such cases, the task of analysis is not to choose the 'right' one but to discuss why a production or certain scene might give occasion to such dissent (Balme, 2008: 139).

Having outlined the general types of documents and sources that I collected in the research, I would like to reflect on the research process for each of the four case studies. Whilst the interpretive assumptions, the process of vectorisation and my role in reportage and re-construction remained the same throughout, each case provided a very different interpretive context for the metaphor. As such each case required a slightly different research strategy and presented different research challenges.

In the Blair/Brown case, the controlled relationship between the performers and the live audience was highlighted by my own research experience. All of the live performance events were ticketed and highly difficult for ordinary citizens like myself to access. As a result, most of my research was based on video performances of Blair and Brown's speeches which were remediated live on television and, in contrast to the physical performances, highly accessible online through a variety of websites like YouTube, The Labour Party website and news outlets like the BBC News website. In this way, by collecting and downloading these videos, I was able to experience the performances in a live setting 'as they happened' and then

re-watch them to appreciate the nuances of the performers' body work and script.

I was also able to re-construct the context of the performance using the reviews of the performance in the media. I collected a selection of the daily newspapers – The Guardian, The Times, The Telegraph, The Daily Mirror and The Daily Express - on the day of the performances in question and also the day after. In addition I searched the online for reviews of the performances using the LexisNexis database.

The desk-bound nature of researching this case meant that my material experience was concerned with the process of watching mediated performances. The freedom of being able to watch the performance wherever and whenever I wanted gave me a sense of interaction and empowerment through my experience of watching, which I analyse in greater detail in Chapter 4. However, because this case maintained such a high profile in the public sphere, the performance was (and still is) being continually re-constructed as further reflections continue to surface about, for example, the relationship between Blair and Brown. This created an abundance of data available about this performance, which had an overloading effect on me as an audience member and became a key feature of my analysis of the case. It highlighted the fact that even in a busy public sphere, some performances nonetheless have the ability to dominate and set the agenda. Moreover, the ongoing narrative and constantly evolving interpretive context highlights how time-specific and situated my own analysis is.

In researching the SNP case, I experienced a mixture of live and mediated performances. Living in my home constituency of Kelvin in

Glasgow, which had many swing voters, I was able to collect much of the data on campaign advertising and posters as they appeared in the public sphere and I was thus able to appreciate their setting. I collected leaflets, took photos of billboards, drew maps of where the billboards and posters were and performed counts to ascertain the density of promotional material in any given area. In this way I collected the data that provided the 'context' for the performances of the political actors involved. As I explore in Chapter 5, this context was very much part of the performance and added to the circus effect of the SNP election campaign.

I also found that membership of the live audience the SNP performance was more accessible than the Blair/Brown case and I attended a number of campaign events in person. Early in my research development I conducted two preliminary interviews with SNP party workers in an attempt to gain backstage access to the performance process however these eventually proved to be unhelpful in my description of the metaphor.¹¹ The experience conflicted my role as an 'outsider' audience member and my strategy of performance analysis, something which is consistent across the case studies. It was my research aim to describe the visible, on-stage aspects of the performances rather than the backstage, and the wealth of performances by the SNP in the public sphere, such as Scotland's Big Party and Alex Salmond's chopper visits, provided more than enough data for analysis.

These live performances were complemented by performances both online and through the media. In particular, I collected data from the SNP

¹¹ In any case, tellingly, this SNP access was retracted for myself and other researchers due to a desire to keep election strategy details secret and control what was visible in the public sphere.

website by recording the updates on the online newsfeed and also downloading the SNPtv video streams and comments in their entirety. Re-constructing the SNP performance from the online newsfeed of the SNP website and setting it against the context of the media commentary (obtained through searches using LexisNexis) was very illuminating. As I argue in Chapter 5, this fragmented way of presenting the performance through many different channels generated the effect of an incongruous and incoherent plot.

The Faslane case offered a different research perspective as I attended these highly accessible performances in person and there was not much media coverage to provide context. In fact, in one performance I was the only audience member and this is where the relevance of Phelan's conceptualisation of performance as a form of disappearance became clear. I was able to appreciate those aspects of the performance when 'nothing happened', which were not present in the mediated performance of Faslane on, for example, the website. Being physically present for the Faslane performances undoubtedly affected my reportage and re-construction of the metaphor in other ways. I was able to integrate certain experiential features into my analysis that made it different from the mediated performance, such as the effect of the cold weather on performers or the discomfort of sitting on concrete.

However, my research of the Faslane case was not only through membership of the live audience but the mediated one as well as I gathered data about the case online. I monitored the Faslane 365 website throughout the year and recorded many of the photos and videos that featured on its pages. This case highlighted in particular the various routes that the political actor has to remediate their performance in the public sphere and interact

with their audience on their own terms. This was especially relevant when I collected and analysed the performers' mediatised performances on Youtube and the Faslane 365 websites.

Finally, the 7/7 Bombings case was unique in this thesis both because I experienced it exclusively in a mediatised form but also it was a historical case. In addition to my own personal memories of the tragedy, which allowed me to consider my own reportage of the performance, I relied on the copies of major newspapers I had collected at the time in anticipation for future research. These ranged from 6 July 2005 to 21 July 2005 and provided valuable and detailed insight into how the performance of the bombings was re-constructed by the media accounts in the aftermath and then, additionally, allowed me to re-construct the action for analysis.

I also researched the case online and experienced the mediatised performance in various forms such as video footage of the crisis developing on BBC News, or mobile phone footage of the scene in the underground tunnels taken by survivors (also downloaded from BBC News). This footage was complemented by media commentary and the narratives told by survivors and victims' families found by searching LexisNexis and analysing screen dumps found in television archives (BBC and Channel 4). The totalising effect of the performance meant that, like the Blair/Brown case, there was an abundance of data about the performance. I focused primarily on the action of the performance itself as well as the roles of the performers and audience members. Also similar to the Blair/Brown case, this case was, and is, constantly evolving as more data emerges about the bombers and the survivors and as such I do not claim that its treatment in this thesis is definitive. Rather it is set within a particular interpretive context.

3.4.3 Data analysis: representation, transformation and interaction

In order to maintain a rigorous and authoritative approach to the research I used a structured method of data analysis as a way of exploring my subjective experience of the performance. As I have already noted, as part of the process of participant observation I used the tool of performance notation using Pavis's performance analysis questionnaire. Filling in the questionnaire led me to reflect on my material experiences immediately after the performance and allowed me to record my experiences in a structured way. It formed the beginnings of the process of data analysis whilst maintaining an appreciation of the material in the performance.

After the primary data collection had taken place, I used the concepts of performance theory to structure my analysis. Taking all the data together as a whole I considered it according to the three precepts of performance that I outlined in Chapter 2; representation, transformation and interaction.

In terms of representation, my analysis was centred around the staging of the performance and the choices that the political actors had made in constructing the representation. This involved analysing it in terms of script, timing, plot and action. My aim was to identify, describe and understand how the representation had been constructed and whether it was convincing or not. I also considered the performance in light of its purported relationship to reality. By this I mean I reflected on whether the performance claimed to be 'real' and authentic or embraced the concept of representation as part of its construction.

In considering the issue of transformation I focused on the changes that the dynamic of each performance enacted. I explored these changes as they

applied to the performance space, the performers (both in terms of their performing minds and performing bodies), and other physical transformations that the performances enacted such as costume, set design and disruption of everyday rhythms. I also looked at transformation in terms of the plot and the transformative aims of the performance. I considered what transformations each performance might enact on the mental and physical state of the audience both during and after the show. I analysed if and how the representation implied a desired transformative outcome performance in its form and content.

Finally, I analysed the data in terms of interaction between the performance and the audience. I considered the opportunities for audience interaction and ability for spect-actors to respond with performances of their own. I analysed this both in terms of the opportunities for spatial interaction (for example, through proximity to the performers or mechanisms of mediatisation) as well as on the more theoretical level of whether the audience could be empowered by enacting any kind of response to the performance. I also considered the physical and technical limits of the performance and the factors for inclusivity in both the live and mediated audiences.

The process of writing the metaphor was also a process of analysis. The precepts of representation, transformation and interaction were useful for analysing my material experience of the performance and to a large extent influenced the explication of the metaphor of politics-as-performance as I have written it in this thesis. However, in keeping with my original aim of providing a thick description of the metaphor, I engaged in semiotic analysis within the research process, organised by the process of vectorization discussed above. I used the four vectors as mind mapping devices to

organise the systems of signs that were evident in my experience of the performances. This helped to deliver the semiotic understanding of the performances and generated the basis for the thick description. I view the semiotic and observational forms of analysis as complementary rather than contradictory in their ability to generate a thick description of the metaphor.

3.4.4 My role as researcher: reportage or reconstruction?

This discussion of the process of data collection and analysis prompts reflection on my role as researcher. Demonstrating, perhaps, the privileging of the live that is present in Performance Studies, Pavis describes the role of the analyst as either one of reportage or reconstruction of the performance (Pavis, 2003: 9-12). Reportage is similar to the role of the live radio sports broadcaster who reports, in the heat of the moment, the ‘emotional punctuation’ and lived experience of the performance. Reconstruction, on the other hand, is the collection of documents after the performance event itself. These include the artists’ “statements of their intentions...and mechanical recordings made from every vantage point and in all possible forms (sound tape, video, film, CD-ROM, digital imaging” in an effort to “restore a proportion of the audience’s aesthetic experience” (Pavis, 2003: 10). We might consider that the difference between reportage and reconstruction is the conceptualisation of the researcher either as the key mediator of the performance, or as an analyst of other mediations.

In both cases the researcher (and their perception of the performance) is the main instrument of the research and this feature of performance analysis is reflected in this thesis. Throughout the research process I positioned myself as both researcher and audience member of each performance and

reflected on my own experience of the metaphor of politics-as-performance. As such, this thesis is a study of performance through the research but also a study of audience through my role as researcher as I offer my own reportage of the lived experience of the performances. Because I considered the mediated performances as monuments in their own right, rather than copies of a more authentic live performance, I argue that the process of reportage can be applied to the mediated performances as well. Throughout I have been interested to note how the live and mediated remediate each other.

This central importance of reportage of subjective experience in this thesis is essential given the particular topic of research. As I discussed in Chapter 2, performance is an embodied activity that is enacted in front of an audience. In order to access understandings of politics *as* performance it is essential to be a part of this process, to experience and appreciate the materiality of performance as a living art. To do this, the researcher must also be an audience member. I ensured that the research was reliable and authoritative by employing a structured use of both data collection and data analysis. I triangulated my personal experience of the performances with documents that recorded my experience (performance notation) and reviews of the performances from other audience members (through the inclusion of scripts and media sources in the research). Then, in the process of data analysis I rigorously subjected to the data according to the same precepts of performance theory across all cases.

However, the concept of reconstruction is more problematic. I find the idea of trying to reproduce the live audience's experience by analysing recordings from every vantage point unconvincing because it would not only be impossible but it privileges the live as authentic. This, as I suggested in

Chapter 2, would be a counter-intuitive approach to the context of politics because for most audiences the political sphere is observed in its mediated form. Nonetheless there is an element of reconstruction in my role as a researcher, both in the research process (in trying to reconstruct the details of a mediated performance through newspaper reviews) and also in the writing up process (by reconstructing the performance for the reader). I conceive of my role of reconstruction not as an attempt to restore the live, but as a way of re-constructing, and indeed deconstructing, the system of meaning that each performance conveys.

So, I conceptualise my role as researcher as one of both reportage and reconstruction of the meanings of both the individual performance, and indeed more generally, the metaphor of politics-as-performance. This is reflected in the two-tier research strategy I adopted. Reportage is more associated with the process of describing the material aspects of the performance and reconstruction more focused on considering the signification. However, throughout I remained reflective and critical about the nature of the research process and my role as both researcher and audience-member as is essential when embarking upon an enquiry composed of representations.

3.5 Conclusion

As this synopsis of the research process has shown, all the cases were different, and although I analysed all of them using the same methodology of participant-observation combined with performance analysis from the perspective of the audience, the data collection was tailored to the individual case. The resulting mix of mediated and live performance was intentionally conceived to allow me to explore the ontology of

representation: to consider what categories of representation existed for the political performers, whether this related to the performers' status as conventional or unconventionally representative, who constituted the audience in each case and how accessible each performance was for the ordinary citizen. In this way I provide a rich thick description of different ways of deliberating and representing in the public sphere that is situated within the interpretive context of the case.

It is perhaps appropriate at this point in the thesis to pause for an interval. In the first half of this thesis I explored a range of theoretical discussions relevant to the metaphor of politics-as-performance. I outlined the restyling of politics and how the performance of the political persona was relevant to the concepts of both representation and deliberation. I introduced key ideas in performance theory which expanded on the complexity of the metaphor of politics-as-performance and, in this chapter, described my methodology in proceeding with the research.

In the second half of this thesis I describe and analyse the four empirical case studies. The process of performance analysis highlighted different aspects of the metaphor and as such each of the following chapters maintains its own organising logic specific to the interpretive context of the case. I begin with the application of the metaphor to the performances of conventionally representative political actors through the cases of the Blair/Brown handover and the SNP election campaign. I explore their representation and deliberation in the public sphere and highlight the importance of ritual in the Blair/Brown case and the contrasting themes of *paidia* and *ludus* in the SNP case. Then I describe the performances of citizens who engage in an alternative form of representation in the public sphere, using two forms of direct action. These cases show how these

unconventional political actors move from deliberating, through the embodiment of resistance in the case of Faslane 365, to the abandonment of deliberation through the spectacle of horror in the 7/7 London bombings case. Finally, I offer my conclusions of the research and reflect on the strengths of applying the metaphor of politics-as-performance to these cases.

Chapter 4:

Performing Politicians: Representation, Authenticity and Ritual in the Blair/Brown handover

The metaphor of politics-as-performance is perhaps most commonly recognised in the everyday vernacular as a negative sneer against conventional parliamentary politics. On reflection, this identification of politician-as-performer is to be expected as the two groups occupy a similar social position. Like famous actors, politicians enjoy a certain notoriety as public figures and as such their day-to-day affairs are a matter of general interest and, in a media-dominated age, a matter worthy for public consumption. In a representative democracy like the UK, the role of a politician is performative in that it is based in the public practice of representing constituents in Parliament or, more broadly, in the public sphere. The politics-as-performance sneer problematises this performative role by implying a mistrust of the political system. It highlights the similarities between fabrication and acting, and questions the boundary between manipulating and persuading in deliberation.

With this in mind, I choose conventional politics as the place to start this description of the metaphor of politics-as-performance. Classic accounts of deliberative democracy are concerned with rational argumentation and are optimistic that consensus can be reached through open and fair competition in the 'marketplace of ideas'. The politician-as-performer sneer highlights the fallibility of this process by suggesting that the politician is not authentic, that the process of rational argument has been hijacked by 'spin' and the positions that they appear to adopt are not what they 'really' believe.

In this chapter I consider both how far the politician-as-performer metaphor resonates and whether it poses a problem for representation and deliberation as it is experienced. I suggest that representative party politics in the UK are concerned with representation and re-presentation through deliberation in Parliament. This process, contains an innate element of performance. After all, as I discussed in Chapter 2, a performance might be defined as a representation of something in the 'real world' and a particularly interesting aspect of this is the subversive capacity in the re-presentation as both a copy and a constructed entity. This is part of my wider argument that political representation and aesthetic representation have more in common than it would first appear. I also explore the aesthetic form that this representation takes - how the transformations that the politicians enact in their performances look, sound, feel and the stories they tell. Finally, I argue that the politics-as-performance metaphor highlights the role of ritual in conventional politics. Drawing on the work of Victor Turner, I explore how ritual is used in political performance and consider whether the supposed 'inauthenticity' of performing politicians leads to an impoverished form of deliberation and thus a compromised democracy.

4.01 Case Study: Tony Blair/Gordon Brown handover

Whilst there are many fascinating examples that illustrate the politician-as-performer metaphor throughout the world (in contemporary politics one need only consider such characters as Berlusconi, Chavez or Obama) the case study that I focus on in this case comes from a recent chapter in the UK's political history; the handover of the premiership from Tony Blair to Gordon Brown between 10 May and 27 June 2007.

The reason for choosing an example from New Labour more generally is its particular association with spin. New Labour refers to the extremely successful re-launch of the Labour Party in the early 1990s led by Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and Peter Mandelson (the so-called 'Holy Trinity') and of course the infamous communications director Alastair Campbell. Much of their success was attributed to bringing the party in line with modern communication strategies (popularly known as 'spin doctoring') by introducing the use of image consultancy firms, a higher reliance on focus group market research, and a stricter policy on party unity and being 'on-message' (Fairclough, 2000). As such, New Labour is an especially interesting case as the party has a heritage of reflexivity about its public image and performance. Perhaps as a result of this reflexivity, New Labour has been the main target of criticism about the increasing mediatisation and triviality of UK politics and is often associated with the politics-as-performance metaphor (Fairclough, 2000; Finlayson, 2003).

Whilst the party is interesting as a political entity, another reason to choose this particular case study is the varying performance styles of the two key actors. Tony Blair is a fluid and confident performer who is, it would seem, at ease under the spotlight of public attention, whether he is in Parliament or on a chat-show sofa. Conversely, perhaps due to the direct comparison with Blair's capacity as a 'natural performer', Gordon Brown has been characterised as enigmatic and dour. He is seen as a begrudging actor in the world of mediatised politics. This difference in performance style, and the successes and failures of each politician's approach, is a key reason for this case study.

After months of speculation about his departure date, Tony Blair - the 3-term prime minister since the election landslide in 1997 - finally resigned on

27 June 2007 and handed over to his long time political ally and sometime rival, Chancellor Gordon Brown. To explore the performance, I focus on four 'scenes' or mini-performances as the key empirical data whilst using media sources as a backdrop. These four scenes take the form of performed speeches made by the two key actors: Tony Blair's resignation speech in the Trimdon Labour Club on 10 May; his final Prime Ministers Questions (PMQs) in the morning of 27 June; Gordon Brown's first speech as Prime Minister before entering No 10 Downing Street that afternoon; and, finally, Gordon Brown's first speech as prime minister to the annual Labour party conference on 27 September.

Whilst these speeches are interesting as standalone performances, because the Blair/Brown handover is character rather than context-based it is heavily reliant on the previous political performances by these actors. The handover is the climax to the much larger performance that is the 'Blair and Brown' history and it is difficult to disentangle the two. This is an interesting aspect of politicians' performances more generally in that they are strongly structured by the historical context of what has come before. The performance of this handover is interesting because it is concerned with endings and beginnings in this series of constant flux and change. As we shall see, Blair and Brown's performances are liminal performances that signify political change. As such they are concerned with the ideas of legacy, scripting history and indeed ritual.

I draw out four strands of analysis in this chapter. First, I describe the performance space to set the handover performance in context and consider how each performance is staged in personal, institutional and national settings. Then I move on to explore the ritualized narrative of the performance and the idea of attempting to script history and national

identity in the process of 'becoming' the leader. I also explore the performance techniques used in the characterisation of the political actors, first through the content of their speeches and then in the physical performances, or 'body work', of Blair and Brown as political actors. Finally, I conclude that this conventional political representation illustrated in the Blair-Brown handover is highly performative and ritualized. Rather than being negatively associated with spin and undermining democracy, these performative features have an important role in generating a sense of authenticity to the representative claims of the political actors.

4.1 Symbolic settings: personal, institutional, national

The organising principle of traditional representative democracy is to divide the citizens into units that can be represented and then to tally the votes for an individual candidate to represent each one. In UK parliamentary politics the chosen political unit is the constituency, which is spatially defined.¹² As such, where a citizen lives dictates how they are represented in parliament. Democracy, representation and space are in this way intimately connected as the threads of political power are stretched over these spaces through local, national and international politics.

The symbolic importance of space in our political system makes the setting of each performance examined in this thesis worthy of further analysis. As Carlson notes in discussing space and the semiotics of theatre architecture, “places of performances generate social and cultural meanings of their own which in turn help to structure the meaning of the entire theatre experience” (Carlson, 1989: 2). Performance space, then, resonates meaning, helps to define the relationship between audience and performer and also forms the *mise-en-scene* that situates the narrative.

4.1.1 Individual speeches: Trimdon Labour Club and Bournemouth International Centre

The objective, “external” setting of Blair’s resignation speech was Trimdon Labour club in his constituency of Sedgefield (Pavis, 2003: 151). Blair was the

¹² At the time of writing the UK parliament uses a ‘First Past The Post’ voting system rather than Proportional Representation.

Member of Parliament for the Sedgefield constituency in county Durham from 1983 to 2007. Trimdon is a small, rural, former mining village in the north of England over 200 miles north of London and Trimdon Labour Club is the local village hall that plays host to a variety of community activities on a regular basis. As a 'working men's club', it is associated with Old Labour and the traditional Labour strongholds based in working class communities in Northern England. These clubs are symbolic places that resonate the theme of working class politicisation, empowerment and deliberation. They are also humble, unpretentious places that provide recreation and educational facilities where, historically, miners could spend their leisure time.

At first blush, choosing this simple and un-glamorous performance space seems incongruous with Blair's previous performances. Blair's premiership was characterised by his foreign policies - his "shoulder-to-shoulder" relationship with the US and Britain's interventions in Kosovo and Iraq. Towards the end of his premiership he was often criticised as an international politician with little interest in domestic affairs (White, 2001; Crampton, 2007). Coming back to his constituency highlighted a slight tension between the dual roles of prime minister and international statesman in a politically globalised world. The incongruity stems from the fact that Blair is a global actor, often seen in the prestigious spaces that are the backdrop to state occasions. Indeed it was strange to see him in this fairly unrecognisable constituency space. As Edelman notes, political settings are usually chosen and designed with "massiveness, ornateness and formality" in mind (1985: 96).

We can trace this sense of massiveness and formality at least in Gordon Brown's conference speech performance in Bournemouth International

Centre. Although Bournemouth is not a particularly high-profile political town, it is a popular choice, along with Brighton and Blackpool, for Labour Party conferences. The choice of Bournemouth was thus in keeping with a loosely adhered to political tradition of the week-long political holiday at the seaside for the annual conference season, where the conference is an important social and political event.¹³ The wider performance space of this resort town set the context for this performance as separate from the usual London-centric political settings of Parliament and Downing Street and gave a sense of formality to the occasion.

The setting of the performance in the Bournemouth International Centre (BIC) also generated a sense of scale. With a capacity for over 6000 people in its Windsor Hall alone, the BIC is a large venue more commonly used as the backdrop to pop concerts, sporting championships and, other large scale cultural and business events. This multi-hall complex reflected the massiveness of the conference in general, of which Brown's performance was a part rather than the whole. Unlike Blair's performance, it was a conventional performance space with no particularly personal connection to Brown.

The connection between Blair and Sedgefield, on the other hand, was built up over many repeat performances. Blair often went back to Sedgefield for key political occasions - for example, in 2003 he took President George W Bush on a tour of his constituency, including a visit to the local pub. The UK political system also re-asserts the spatial importance between representative and constituency by requiring MPs to hold weekly surgeries and the 'election

¹³ However this has changed since 2008 where both Conservatives and Labour moved to northern industrial cities.

results' performance there. As a result whilst this performance space seems unrecognisable and unimportant, it had a discourse of fame around it that was generated through its role in previous performances. As one of the supporters in attendance noted, "everyone knows where Sedgefield is and everyone has heard of Trimdon Labour Club" (White, 2007). So, Trimdon Labour Club was and is a place of contradictions – most of the time it is a local venue in a small town but it has also been witness to some of the seminal political events in the last 10 years, from Blair's 1997 landmark election, to the famous visits by world leaders. It has an odd celebrity of its own that is steeped in the political history of Blair.

As such whilst this was seemingly an unconventional place to see Tony Blair, it was not unpolitical. Blair made this connection in the opening sentence of his speech: "I have come back here, to Sedgefield, to my constituency, where my political journey began and where it is fitting it should end"(Blair, 2007b). Blair identified the space as his own and as central to his esteemed autobiography. It was 'his' constituency, both a part of him and also, he reminded us, the very reason for his political power. This space thus communicated a neat symmetry to Blair's leadership story and the spatial aspect of the representative route to political power. The fact that he chose to come back to Sedgefield for this crucial time in his career, for his grand exit, suggested that his constituency remained central to his identity as a politician. In short, it suggested that his character was not all style over substance.

Gordon Brown's conference speech performance, on the other hand, was not steeped in the political history of Brown but in the history of the Labour Party. As such, the performance space signified a ritualised institutional event rather than the 'once in a lifetime' Blair resignation. It reinforced his

authority as the new leader by acting as a sign of continuity and connection between the past, present and future of the party. Whereas Blair's performance space symbolised Blair on a personal level as he stepped out of his representative public role, Brown's performance space communicated on an institutional level as he embarked upon his leadership role within the party.

Let us now consider the gestural space created by the performers' movements and stage presence. Trimdon Labour Club was simple, unpretentious and there was distinct lack of the slick stylishness that we might more commonly associate with Blair. It was very intimate and not technically designed to accommodate an event of this scale. This was reflected by the fact that the audience (of roughly 250 people) filled the space to capacity. They were very closely packed and mostly standing so that they appeared as a crowd rather than individually defined audience members. This lack of space meant that the staging area for the performance was very small and Blair appeared to be surrounded by the audience in a tight semi-circle.

The unseated, crowd-like audience generated an impression of authenticity because it made it seem impromptu. There were less overt signs of careful staging and choreography that are often present in other political performances like conference speeches or campaign videos. Compared with the formally seated audience in Brown's conference speech, there was less overt evidence of its "contrived character" (Edelman, 1985: 96). Even the positioning of Blair in the room generated this sense of casual organisation. In Brown's conference speech he was elevated on a large stage, positioned off-centre and flanked by large screens whereas Blair's position behind a

simple white reader, in front of a red 'New Labour' slogan poster was much more low key.

The stage layout also added a sense of intimacy to Blair's performance. Unlike Brown's wide stage in the cavernous conference hall, the live audience appeared almost to share the same space as the performer. This spatial intimacy symbolised a closer, more interactive relationship between Blair and his audience because the lack of spatial separateness created the impression of a more deliberative, consensus-based setting. This impression of connectedness with the live audience was echoed on a national scale as a symbol of Blair's relationship as leader of the nation. Put another way, whereas Blair's performance space put him on equal terms with the audience (he was one of them), Brown stood apart and was looked up to both spatially and symbolically (see Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2).



Figure 4.1 Blair leaves podium of resignation speech. *Photo: BBC Website*



Figure 4.2 Brown addresses Labour Party at conference speech. *Photo: BBC Website*

The staging of Blair's performance worked well because Blair, as a political performer, was very effective in this environment and he appeared comfortable with the audience interaction that the small, intimate performance space encouraged. His ability to react to spontaneous heckles and applause from the audience made his performance seamless. The space also complemented the content of the speech which was personal, reflective and delivered with what appeared to be heart-felt emotion.

The staging of Brown's performance also matched his strengths as a performer. Brown is not a naturally expressive or emotional performer and as such the large screens that remediated his facial expression helped to engage the audience in the emotional content of his speech. Moreover, the conference hall setting, where Brown was spatially distant from the audience, reinforced the structure of the performance and audience interaction. It was highly controlled and linear, he performed and they applauded.

4.1.2 *'The most benevolent crowd in the country'*¹⁴

Place and space were defining factors for audience inclusion in this case. The majority of the 'live' and present audience for both performances were all carefully-chosen and pro-Labour. This is common practice for party conferences whose attendees are issued with passes. But it is interesting to note that this was also the case for Blair's Trimdon speech. Despite the appearance of Blair's performance as impromptu and unplanned, the organisers in fact exercised an extremely rigid control over who shared the same performance space as Blair. The intimate and deliberative setting was contrived. This was reflected in the quick treatment of two protestors who were swiftly ushered away when they came near the entrance. As some newspaper commentators put it at the time, considering the troubles that Blair dealt with in the final months of his premiership, if there was anywhere that Blair maintained a high level of popularity it was in 'his' constituency and it was with this particular group of people (Hoggart, 2007; White, 2007). It was, perhaps, the most 'benevolent crowd in the country'.

Members of the carefully chosen audience of Blairites behaved more like fans than observers and added their own transformations to the space. Many sported colourful banners with slogans such as 'Tony Rocks' and 'Thank you Tony'. This 'audience' was very much a performer and an intrinsic part of the resignation speech performance - they danced to the pop music that played in the background ("Things Can Only Get Better" by D:ream, "Search for the Hero Inside Yourself" by M People), cried when Blair said goodbye

¹⁴ Quoted in (Kuenssberg, 2007)

and loudly cheered as he left the performance area. In theatrical terms, they resembled an Ancient Greek chorus wailing behind the central character. As such, this performance, more so than the others considered in the thesis, had an audience chosen for the role it had to play within the performance itself.

Brown's physically present audience similarly had a part to play in solidifying and authorising his leadership in the rite of passage that was his keynote address. However, whilst they were obviously sympathetic, Brown's audience was not as overwhelmingly positive as that of Blair. The setting of the Labour Party Conference meant that a wide range of people were in the audience, from Labour Party officials and activists to MPs and trade unionists. As such it was not as homogenous as the audience at Sedgefield, not least because the party was still recovering from the Blairite-Brownite fractures that the politics of the Blair-Brown handover had enacted. Brown's audience needed to be convinced and converted, rather than just being there to observe and celebrate.

This leads us to consider how reflexive the live audiences were about their role in the performances. As one journalist noted, the banners at Blair's performance were "suspiciously similar" in style and, moreover, dedicated Labour followers in both cases would naturally want to give the impression of a hugely successful performance (Hoggart, 2007). In this way there was a tension between the physically present audience and the intended audience, the electorate who watched the mediatised performances.

Edelman makes a similar point in his discussion of the mediatised political performance of the US President answering journalists' questions. He argues that because they are within the frame that the televised performance provides, "the reporters asking questions are themselves part of

the setting” (Edelman, 1985: 101), and we see this echoed in the role of the live audiences for the performances of both Blair and Brown. The audience of the mediatised performance had the opportunity to judge the ‘live’ audience both as a part of the performances and as a barometer of their success. The ‘live’ audiences for both reflexively tailored their actions accordingly.

This pivotal performative role of the audience was reflected in their prominence in the televised versions of the performances. Both performances involved close-up camera angles and live, sweeping shots that mimicked the human eye looking around the room at the audience, at times zooming in on particular audience members to capture their reactions and at other times focusing on the scenery and staging. Coming back to Bolter and Grusin’s (2000) duality of immediacy and hypermediacy, these performances generated a sense of immediacy by mimicking the experience of ‘being there’ and being a member of the audience but at the same time this drew attention to the privileged viewing position that the mediatised audience was able to achieve by virtue of the camera technology – the mediatised audience certainly got a better view of Blair than, it would appear, the back row of the cramped live one.

Moreover, the mediatised audience did not have to watch the performance in real time. Members of this audience could pause and rewind the performance, watch sections of it again for closer analysis and remediate the fragmented experience into images, audio-only or shorter clips. The mediatised audience thus exercised an independence in how they watched these performances, in so far as that did not include accessing the ‘live’. Whilst there was an irreducibility in ‘being there’ as an audience member of the live performance, the mediatised performance was not only the more

important (in terms of its potential impact) but it offered the most accessibility, perceptual freedom and interactivity in terms of the experience of watching.

Whilst both performances were heavily mediated on TV, radio and online, they were very different in their use of media in the *mise-en-scene*. Blair's performance, with its focus on intimacy and casual organisation, lacked obvious signs of mediating technologies, and in fact generated a sense of authenticity because of it. There were no screens projecting his face, no obvious autocue, no complex lighting system and no video projections to provide a backdrop. Following Auslander (1999), we might argue that this is an illustrative example of the live performance getting its value from the mediated because it appeared exclusive and authentic only in comparison to the seemingly contrived and mediated performance of, for example, Brown's conference speech. Without this comparison, we might have described Blair's performance in less favourable terms as poorly executed, simplistic and underwhelming.

Brown's performance, on the other hand, gained authority and authenticity by virtue of its mediating technologies. The large screens, the autocue and the complex lighting all added a sense of professionalism to his speech. This was not only reminiscent of previous Labour leadership speeches (and so a mimicry of how the audience expected a leader to present him/herself) but essential in generating an image of a modern political world leader who was comfortable with a mediated public sphere. The use of mediating technologies, then, was not as simple as live-as-authentic versus mediated-as-contrived. It was context-dependent and situated within the narrative of each performance.

4.1.3 *Corridors of Power: the Debating Chamber, Buckingham Palace and Number 10*

In contrast to Blair and Brown's locations for their individual performances, the handover itself took place in key political spaces that are recognisable at the level of the nation; the House of Commons (for Blair's final PMQs), Buckingham Palace (for Blair to officially tender his resignation and Brown to accept the premiership) and 10 Downing Street (for Blair's departure and Brown's arrival as Prime Minister).

The location of these buildings, the City of Westminster, has been the centre of authority and power for the last thousand years. Even though that millennium has seen massive changes in the structure of political power, the space serves as a constant backdrop that features highly in the national consciousness, evoking a deep sense of history and political identity. This sense of continuity is reflected in the ornate gothic architecture of the buildings whose facades have seen little change since they were built.¹⁵ The massive riverside Houses of Parliament, for example, originally designed in the 1700s, were in fact rebuilt after the Second World War bombings in almost exactly the same way to preserve the original layout. Similarly the interior has been updated – notably improved technologies such as lighting and the wiring for TV – however this has been done with an effort to minimise changes to its outward appearance.

¹⁵The facade of the rebuilt Houses of Parliament reflected the Gothic revivalist vision of its architects Charles Barry and Augustus W Pugin who won an open competition because their gothic design embodied 'conservative values' unlike the neo-classical style popular at the time (as exemplified by The White House) with its association with revolution and republicanism. For further details see "Living Heritage: Architecture of the Palace" at www.parliament.uk/

As such the handover day performance was both haunted by this prestigious history and also made more authoritative by it. Westminster's privileged position in the national consciousness means that it is a heavily controlled space, bound by the soft conventions set out by previous performances of state functions (for example leadership changes or state openings of parliament) and also by the hard and unyielding security measures both inside and outside the buildings. This performance space scripted the handover performance by controlling the form and aesthetic that it took.

The handover performance did not enact many transformations of the space so unlike Brown's conference performance there were no multimedia screen backdrops or Labour Party brandings to provide a setting for the performers. Rather the focus was centred on the performer's relationship to the iconic political spaces of Parliament, Buckingham Palace or No 10. As Edelman notes, the fact that there are dedicated places for the performance of politics signify that it is a "special occasion" separate from everyday life and give the proceedings a "heroic quality" (Edelman, 1985: 96). His point applies to this case study where these symbolically political spaces set the scene for the actions within them to be considered authoritative.

Parliament in particular warrants closer analysis because it is the theatre for the performance of politics. By this I mean that in the same way that theatres are designed to accommodate performance, so is Parliament for political debate and, in both cases, the space defines and controls the form that performance takes. Looking at the Debating Chamber within the House of Commons (the setting for Blair's final PMQs) we might reflect that it is also the main performance space for political representation, the space where MPs re-present the interests of their constituents in deliberations that affect

their lives. Charles Goodsell, in a review on the architecture of parliaments, highlights the adversarial style of the chamber, with the two dominant opposing parties staged directly opposite one another (Goodsell, 1988). This spatial layout reflects the aggregative first-past-the-post voting system that is designed to assure the government's dominance over the opposition and in this performance space any dialogue looks more like a conflict. As Thomas Markus (2001) explores in his book *The Words Between the Spaces*, compared with the agora set up of, for example, the Scottish Parliament, this would appear to be a poor layout for deliberation and working towards a goal of agreement or consensus.

Reflecting on Blair's final PMQ performance, however, shows that this spatial layout puts the main performer in a prime position - the empty floor space that separates the two sides allowed an unfettered view of Blair in centre-stage with his supporters flanking him. So, from a purely performance perspective, it is a good layout that gives the central and indeed more powerful actors on the front bench maximum visibility. As Edelman notes on policymaking in general, it is a drama that is "constructed to be presented to the public", both by their representatives and in visible representations, of which the performance space is an important part .

Number 10 Downing Street, popularly known simply as 'Number 10', is similarly iconic as the dedicated office of the Prime Minister. This space reflects the role of the Prime Minister as both a public representative and a private person – in addition to hosting cabinet meetings in the Cabinet Room and entertaining high profile guests, it is also the Prime Minister's home for the duration of her or his term, a situation Thatcher infamously described as "living above the shop" (Number 10 website). However in contrast to the House of Commons, where the interior is instantly recognisable, No 10 is

perhaps best recognised by its outside features, namely the black door with the number 10. As such Brown's arrival at this space, his move from the Treasury next door at Number 11 Downing Street, solidified his position as Prime Minister. His actions were made iteratively authoritative by previous political performances in front of the Number 10 door, in particular Thatcher's dramatic departure in 1990 and Blair's triumphant arrival in 1997.

The performers' gestural use of space was also affected by these iterative performances. During the course of the handover day, the key performers had to travel between these different symbolic locations in a particular order and at a particular time. Blair had to leave Number 10, deliver his final PMQs and then visit Buckingham Palace whilst Brown had to vacate Number 11, go to Buckingham Palace after Blair left and then, finally, arrive at Number 10. This process of travelling reinforced the break between the old and the new leader and provided a parallel to the liminal narrative of the performance. The physical mobility of the performers helped to reinforce the idea that this was a time of change, mobility and moving forward.

Moreover, the use of space highlighted the importance of the embodied political performer being seen to perform certain actions in certain places. For example, for Blair to resign he had to make the journey to Buckingham Palace to deliver his resignation in person. Even though this action could have been performed in his private office, perhaps using the telephone or internet, Blair had to be seen to make this journey to generate a sense of transparency and authenticity to his actions.

These elite performance spaces limited the live audience's access to the performance. The House of Commons, Buckingham Palace and No 10 are all highly secure areas, mostly inaccessible to the majority of the electorate

except in the context of guided tours. The Debating Chamber has public galleries (known as the Strangers' Gallery) that overlook the chamber from behind large glass screens, which were metaphorically resonant for the performance.¹⁶ The audience, like the electorate in general, could and indeed should watch their representatives at work and for this reason the screen is transparent. However, in this performance (unlike others that I analyse in this thesis) the spectators were not invited to join in and the screens ensured this by providing a physical barrier. Thus, the performance space reinforced the separateness between actors and audience, between representative and electorate, both in the chamber and in the building at large, with many corridors and rooms being off-limits. In the theatre of Parliament there was a clearly defined onstage and an inaccessible offstage, and strict rules for the audience to adhere to. As such, what was seen and not seen was tightly controlled.

The mediated performances were similarly controlled as camera crews were not allowed free access to record. However, in lieu of this the space was well set up to generate mediated performances. In addition to the Press Gallery in the House of Commons that permanently houses all the offices and studios for reporters, political representation in Parliament is also mediated through a complex set up of cameras and microphones within the Debating Chamber. This recording is streamed live both on Parliament's website and on television channels such as BBC Parliament. As such, Parliament claims to provide full audio and visual coverage of events as they happen and the infrastructure allowed viewers to watch Blair's final PMQ

¹⁶ A security measure since Pro-Hunting campaigners threw purple powder down at Blair in 2004.

performance. Similarly Brown's arrival at Number 10 Downing Street was recorded by the various media teams waiting outside Number 10 in the cordoned off media area and more generally the handover day was covered by most news outlets which provided regular accounts of its progress.

These mediatised performances demonstrated the importance of communicating immediacy in the representation of political representation as the performances were recorded and transmitted live on television and online. Whilst the electorate may not have been able to share the same space and time as their representatives and observe the transfer of power directly, the process of mediatisation allowed the process to become instantly visible.

In describing the use of space in the Blair/Brown case we have seen that very different styles of setting and mise-en-scene were able to provide symbolically resonant contexts for these conventional political performers at the personal, institutional and national levels. These contexts added authority to their representative claims by making their performances highly visible in the public sphere. However, whilst performance space was an important feature in this case, it was not the setting of the Blair/Brown handover that provided the key 'gather and hold' function to draw the audience but rather the topic itself.

4.2 Scripting History: 'Becoming the Leader' and Ritual

Whilst other actors explored in this thesis struggle to gain attention in the public sphere, the handover of power from Blair to Brown did not have this problem. The topic of the national leadership is relevant to the life of every citizen, both because of the internal political power over the domestic agenda that accompanies this role and also the leader's responsibility to represent the nation overseas. As Edelman notes, "when an individual is recognised as a legitimate leading official of the state, he [sic] becomes a symbol for some or all of the aspects of the state: its capacity for benefitting and hurting, for threatening or reassuring" (1985: 73). As such, the leader is a representation of the power of the electorate to exercise their right to change the government in power.

The performance of the Blair-Brown handover focused on one of the most interesting and dynamic aspects of leadership, one that is relatively unusual in UK politics: the bowing out of one leader and the initiation of a new one without an intervening national election. It was a climactic point of tension in the national narrative where the nation provided a constant backdrop as power shifted from one leader to another. It was a liminal time of conflict and suspense because the regime was changing, but also a time of continuity because it relied on the existing structure of democracy and Parliament to give it legitimacy. In this context both Blair and Brown's performances in the handover were in effect their grand exits and entrances within this imagined national narrative and the chance to create lasting legacies and good first impressions.

4.2.1 *The script and authenticity*

Unlike the other events that I explore in this thesis where the plot, action and even performance space are all subject to much change and outside interference, there were pre-written and rehearsed documents on which Blair and Brown's performed speeches were based. This highlights the fact that the performers exercised a high level of control over the timing and execution of the performance. Blair's resignation speech was anticipated for months, if not years, but he chose the date and, in that speech, set the date of the handover – both of these were his prerogative to do as outgoing prime minister. Whilst Brown did not choose the dates of his performances, the resignation speech delivered 6 weeks before the handover gave him plenty of time to prepare and the party conference is a predetermined annual event. This lag time between the knowledge that the performance would happen and the event itself meant that scripting was possible.

The existence of scripts is also a matter of political convention and perhaps necessity in a mediatised political world. The scrutiny of the media encourages political performers to exercise as much control and planning over their performance as possible. It is inadvisable to leave anything to chance because if something goes wrong then the 'gaffe' will be highly public and repeated immediately on a variety of different media outlets, causing potential damage to their reputation. Moreover, for both Blair's resignation speech and Brown's conference speech the key points of the script were 'leaked' before the performance itself, suggesting a reciprocal publicity arrangement between the politicians and the journalists.¹⁷ So, whilst these

¹⁷ Bartle and Griffiths collection *Political Communications Transformed* (2001) provides a useful overview of the agreements and linkages between politicians and

conventional political performers appear to have more control over timing, they were also rigidly bound by convention and expectations of Parliament, the electorate as audience and the necessity of maintaining a good relationship with the media, which all contributed to how this performance was scripted.

More theoretically, the existence of pre-written scripts raises two central questions. First, who is writing the script and, secondly, does it matter that it is scripted? All the speeches in this case study were delivered in the first person and appeared to describe the true beliefs of the performers. However, the scripts were not authored solely by the performer but were collaboratively developed by a team of professional speechwriters and special advisors that the front of house will rarely see. This connects to the negative associations of the metaphor of politics-as-performance because it raises the issue of authenticity of meaning. If these performers are simply 'reading lines' that they have not even written, why should the audience think that they truly believe them? The existence of a script suggests a discontinuity between the actor's mind and his performing body. Put another way, Brown's description of the 'person he is' becomes suspect (Brown, 2007b).

On reflection this situation is not unusual from a performance perspective - audiences are still able to judge a performance on its merits without knowing who authored the script. Performance is a negotiated relationship between the performer and the spectator and, as such, watching a performance involves a more complex mindset than the simplicity of liar

journalists in a historical perspective as well as how political communications has been transformed. (Bartle and Griffiths, 2001) See also (Street, 2001)

versus truth teller. The frame of the performance metaphor shows us that an audience can appreciate that the actor both believes what they are saying and that they are re-presenting their belief in the best possible light.

Applying the frame of performance theory also leads us to question the concept of authenticity, especially within the context of political representation. As I have already noted, the political leader's relationship to the nation and the electorate is one of representation. As such it is difficult to identify a coherent political 'reality' that exists except through representation and so the quest for authenticity of the performer is misplaced. In light of the power inherent in exercising their representative role, it is perhaps better that the political actor is reflexive about the nature of that representation than risk an 'off the cuff' performance that re-presents the nation in a negative or ill-informed light.

A different way of navigating this question of authenticity is to note that the scripts of the speeches are not the only texts that are pertinent to these performances. There is an abundance of texts that relate to the performances of both speeches and the handover day. These are produced by different actors in the mediatised public sphere, such as those scripted by the media commentators and newspaper columnists who are concerned with providing the 'real' meaning of the performance (or at least assessments of its merits). In some ways these other texts are merely reviews of the performance that offer traditional dramaturgic analysis to guide the audience's judgment by setting the performance within context and offering an 'expert' opinion. However, they are also very much part of the performance. With details of the script being 'leaked' beforehand, the audience knew what the performance would be like before it happened. As a result, Blair and Brown's performances were not definitive but scripted and re-scripted by the

other texts (and indeed counter performances) that came before and after them. So, the audience did not come to this political performance cold and did not leave totally convinced.

As a result, the actual narrative of the Blair-Brown handover is difficult to describe because the narrative is constantly evolving. Not only are there the past, present and future performances from the actors that change the audience's understanding of this performance but so does every re-writing and every new perspective that is offered. The sense of anticipation, for example, surrounding Brown's ascension to power affects the way that we can interpret his performance outside No 10, as does the perceived animosity between Blair and Brown and then, a year on, the difficulties of his premiership does it again. The plot is episodic and evolves in a multiplicity of parallel narratives of possibility. Any account of the 'authentic' leader would have to navigate these overlapping spheres of representation in the postmodern public sphere in the search for the real. Rather than the simplicity of 'spin' versus truth, I argue that a better approach is to look at how the discourse of authenticity is used in these political representations and consider why it is valued as a concept.

4.2.2 Ritual, representation and the nation

For now, though, we might reflect that the entire handover was highly ritualised. Ritual can loosely be described as the repetition of certain actions primarily for their symbolic value, rather than, for example, for instrumental reasons. The link between performance and ritual is immediately clear. Ritual, like the reflexive public practice of performance, is designed to be visibly represented in order to be symbolically resonant. In fact, Victor

Turner argues that ritual is a particular genre within performance (Turner, 1988a: 26) and that it is a key vehicle for social cohesion and change. Rituals, for Turner, are liminal performances with both authoritative and playful elements. Schechner similarly echoes this conceptual link by offering an alternative definition of performance as “ritualised behaviour conditioned/permeated by play” (Schechner, 2002: 45). Schechner goes on to argue that ‘ritual and play both lead people into a “second reality” separate from ordinary reality. This reality is one where people can become selves other than their daily selves...ritual and play transform people, either temporarily and permanently’ (Schechner, 2002: 45-49). Where these transformations are permanent, rituals are rites of passage.¹⁸

The transfer of power from Blair to Brown was a rite of passage that involved Blair transforming back into his private, pre-leader self and Brown transforming from Chancellor into Prime Minister. Whilst the ritual perhaps started with Blair’s resignation performance, it was in fact six weeks later on Handover Day where the transformations of Blair and Brown took place. In describing the performance of that day we shall see that it was a secular ritual that was itself a powerful representation of the nation.

The actual transfer of power from Blair to Brown was performed in Westminster on 27 June 2007 over the space of three hours. Blair’s final ‘Prime Minister’s Questions’ (PMQs) at midday, followed by his departure from No 10 Downing Street. Blair then met with the Queen and Brown, having vacated the Treasury at Number 11 Downing Street, had his own

¹⁸ The theme of ritual in Parliament is currently being researched and developed by Prof. Shirin Rai, Prof. Sarah Childs, Prof. Lovenduski and Prof Georgina Waylen at Warwick University. The research project is entitled Gendered Ceremony and Ritual in Parliament. <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/pais/research/gcrp/>

meeting with the Queen. Finally, just before 3pm, the new Prime Minister Brown arrived at No 10 Downing Street.

Looking at Blair's final PMQs we can appreciate that the structure of the event was haunted by wider PMQs traditions. For example, MPs wishing to ask a question had, as usual, to enter their names on the Order Paper and wait to be called by the Speaker, and, in addition, had to 'catch the Speaker's eye' by standing for a minute between the gaps in the script. Many of the conventions that shape and script actions within Parliament, even the jeering and heckling during debates, are as much ritualistic mimics of 19th century parliamentary conventions as they are original performances. These iterative performances added a sense of authority to the proceedings as well as being vectors of continuity with the history of Parliament.

However, Blair's performance differed from other PMQ performances primarily in its non-adversarial atmosphere, brevity and the fact that, as the BBC suggested, "it was - with the tacit connivance of the opposition parties - the most theatrical, well-rehearsed and choreographed set-piece from the master of those arts during his decade in power" (Assinder, 2007). Following tributes from other MPs and a well-timed joke that his "P45 [had] arrived in the post", Blair offered some highly scripted closing comments. He reflected emotionally on politics as "the pursuit of noble causes" and, using the metaphor of performance, ended with "I wish everyone, friend or foe, well. And that is that. The End" (Blair, 2007a). This was met with a standing ovation and applause by MPs from all parties, something which had not happened in living memory to any other Member of Parliament. In this way Blair's final PMQs performance reinforced traditions but also subverted them to highlight the specialness of the occasion.

The second phase of the handover day was at Buckingham Palace where both Blair and Brown met the Queen separately and this was the crucial point where the actual handover happened. Blair formally went into a private meeting with the Queen to tender his resignation and when he left the Queen's private secretary called Brown's office instructing him to "attend Her Majesty immediately". Brown then made the journey from Number 11 Downing Street to Buckingham Palace and met privately with the Queen to accept her request to form a government.

This phase of the performance highlights the importance of ritual and convention more clearly because it features such a strongly performative element. The act of 'tendering resignation' was something that happened, was made real and authoritative, by Blair performing the words in this particular context (there was no official documentation such as a seal of government). Similarly, in the five minutes that it took Brown to get to the Queen and accept her offer, the country technically had no prime minister at all. The sense of ritual becomes more apparent if we consider how far some aspects of this particular performance were from 'the truth'. For example, though the Queen as monarch has constitutionally defined powers that arise from her being a figurehead, it was convention in this performance to treat her as though she actually had the power to appoint Brown as Prime Minister. This is common to most of her roles - for example, the 'Queen's speech' that she performs as part of the State Opening of Parliament is, by convention, written by the Prime Minister. Similarly, Blair's resignation was in this performance called 'accepting stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds' because by convention it is technically impossible for an MP to resign voluntarily during a parliament. Indeed, there are many layers of

representation based on performative rituals that reinforce the authority of the handover.

An interesting point to note here, though, is that despite the performativity of this part of the handover, the actual meetings with the Queen were conducted privately. The actual transformation of Brown from Chancellor to Prime Minister happened off-stage. In some ways this seems odd as, continuing along the line of argument that I have explored thus far, a more public 'coronation' would be more appropriate and add to the authority of the proceedings. However, it offered a useful break-point for the audience to follow. Were the transformation to take place slowly and in front of them, there would be more of a blurring between 'before' and 'after' whereas keeping it offstage made the effect more definite and confident.

Finally, Brown's arrival at Number 10 Downing Street was the point where his transformation into Prime Minister was public and solidified. Performing this ritual provided a visible, physical representation of the diffuse and invisible concept of Brown 'becoming' Prime Minister. If the handover was like a coronation then this was the point where the new 'king' stood to show his crown to the country, a demonstrable representation of his representativeness. However, interestingly, unlike Blair's infamous entry to Number 10 to jubilant crowds, music and celebrations in 1997, Brown's performance was much more muted as he, accompanied by his wife Sarah, paused briefly to deliver a short speech to journalists and then entered the building.

This ritualised transfer of power between Blair and Brown was linked to representations of the nation itself. Drawing on Michael Billig's work on nationalism, we might note that these conventions and traditions of

parliament are not 'seen' so clearly in day to day political life because, like most banal rituals, they provide a quiet and unnoticeable backdrop to the action (Billig, 1995). However, the rite of passage that Blair and Brown had to enact demonstrated how powerful these iterative performances were in terms of generating a sense of national identity and tacitly reinforcing the new leadership. The politician-performers were thus highly constrained in their actions by these conventions but they also gave their position authority and legitimacy. Paradoxically, enacting this 'second reality' of ritual made the transfer of power more real.

4.2.3 'History in the Making'

Whilst all performances are contextual and dependent on the performances that precede them, for the Blair/Brown handover performance, the theme of 'history in the making' was important as their performance of the handover ritual had a place in the history of political power of the nation. In the same way that their handover performance was influenced by this history, it too will come to influence the rituals around future handovers of power

To unpack this idea further, we might consider why the question of national leadership is related to the history of the nation. The democratic leader embodies political power, perhaps not as the traditional 'body politic' of the sovereign, but certainly in the performative sense that their agenda and political decisions, with the electoral mandate, have a good prospect of moving from theory to practice. This potential power to change not only the lives of individual citizens but the structuring institutions of the country (for example, in this case, the NHS and education systems) means that any

narrative of any leadership performance is deeply connected to the narrative of the nation – both symbolically as an embodied representative but also internally as an agent of change. Whilst Blair and Brown's actions were scripted by the wider structure of the ritual of the handover, their performed speeches also gave them the chance to script history in their own way, using their authoritative position as a platform.

Looking at his resignation speech, for example, Blair devoted a paragraph to "my own country, a great country – wonderful history, magnificent traditions, proud of its past" (Blair, 2007b). He sought to identify himself with the historical nation and then, in the rest of the speech, went on to describe the changes that he had enacted throughout his premiership that made the country "today...able not just to be proud of its past but confident of its future" (Blair, 2007b). Brown similarly pledged to be "strong in purpose" as he "[met] the concerns and aspirations of our whole country" (Brown, 2007c). Both actors were keen to suggest a personal and almost emotional relationship with the nation that was at times servile, as we see with Brown's desire to meet its concerns and aspirations, and at other times its saviour, as we see with Blair's determination to lead it through "uncertainty" (Blair, 2007b).

The narrative of these performances was epic, in the poetic sense, and the characters that they portrayed were traditional heroes to the nation-in-distress. As heroes, the actors appealed to a rational audience. They offered to fulfil and perhaps transform their ordinal preferences by highlighting key problems and then promising to fix them. However, by presenting this epic narrative, the actors also appealed to an emotional nationalism in the electorate by embodying 'Britishness' and being a physical symbol for the imagined community of citizens.

In addition to this identification of themselves with the past and future history of the nation, both actors attempted to script this history in their own way. Blair's resignation speech had a reflective, humble and even apologetic tone as he outlined some key features of his time in office, in particular the controversial Iraq War. It showed an acute awareness not only of how his resignation performance would be received but also how his leadership would be judged in the future. Similarly, Brown's speeches looked towards the future and also told the audience how the future would be. Outside No 10, for example, he was "absolutely sure that Britain can be the great global success story of this century" (Blair, 2007b) and in his conference speech Brown described how areas as diverse as anti-social behaviour, foreign policy and the environment would all be subject to "change" (Brown, 2007b). Their performances of these grand exits and entrances were thus attempts to script how history would judge their leadership of the nation.

Both performers also adopted a wider perspective and offered particular narratives of Britain and Britishness. "Britain," Blair asserted, "is a not a follower. It is a leader" (Blair, 2007b) whereas Brown spent much of his conference speech outlining 'British Values' and "the character of Britain" (Brown, 2007b). So we see that this performance offered both a reflection and an articulation of national identity, a representation and a re-presentation that was highly biased to the emotional nationalism of the audience.

In looking at the narrative and scripts of the Blair-Brown handover performance, I have argued that there was a tension between the political actors playing a national role within the structure of the ritual of the transfer of power and their attempt to author how they were judged in that role. I suggested that Blair and Brown's actions were constrained by adhering to the ritual, which acted as a point of historical and political continuity compared

with the upheaval of changing its leading political representative. The performance of this ritual managed the political uncertainty and also authorised Brown's transformation from Chancellor to Prime Minister. Nonetheless Blair and Brown both developed their own characters outside of these ritualised and conventionally representative roles.

4.3 Characterisation: performing the political persona

The trend towards a more presidential, personality-based politics has been noted by a number of academics, with New Labour and the 'Blair effect' being cited as a leading example (Langer, 2007; Fairclough, 2000; Street, 2001; Bartle and Griffiths, 2001). Notably, Ana Langer in her article on the Blair effect '*The Politicization of Private Persona: Exceptional Leaders or the New Rule?*' (2009) considers the extent to which political actors' personalities and personal lives are explored in the press and how this affects the construction of the political persona. She argues that whilst the importance of personality varies with the individual leader, the legacy of the Blair effect is that personality and personal lives have gained public acceptance as important criteria on which to judge future political leaders. This idea resonated clearly in the performed speeches of both Blair and Brown where the organising principle of the narrative in each was the central character and his personal journey through the experience of leadership.

Blair and Brown's characters have been built up through multiple performances during their last 10 years in the public eye. This history unavoidably informs our interpretation of these crucial grand exit and entrance performances and as such warrants further description. In the late 1980s (before the resignation of Neil Kinnock and the transfer of power to John Smith) the Labour Party was quite old fashioned in its communications strategy, preferring to rely on the more ideological and structural support reinforced by its close relationship with the unions. This was unsuccessful for a number of reasons; Union organisations had been eroded by the Thatcher government, the party appeared fractured over issues such as European Community membership and its hard left policies seemed old-

fashioned and untrustworthy in light of the disastrous Winter of Discontent of 1978/79. In short, Labour seemed unelectable. The goal of 'modernisers' such as Blair and Brown was to move the party into a more centrist position that would attract new support. To do this, they not only changed the fundamental ideology of the party by incorporating third way policies, they also changed their communications strategy to re-present the party as a fresh, unified and attractive option for the electorate.

This fresh re-presentation was achieved by adopting a more professional attitude to communications, inspired by techniques in the advertising and PR industries. The ensuing re-branding exercise resulted in a re-launch of the party under the slogan 'New Labour, New Britain' with a re-imaging of the icon that symbolised the party (the red rose) and, more structurally, Mandelson setting up the 'Shadow Communications Agency', which further strengthened the party's relationship with the advertising agency Boase Massimi Pollitt (BMP).¹⁹ The basic premise of the Labour Party's new strategy was to identify its target audience using marketing techniques such as focus groups and opinion polling and then shape the image of the party into something that audiences would vote for.

In effect, the way that the Labour Party was represented to the public, the political information it generated, was restyled with the character of the leader now taking centre stage. This raises the question of why characterisation should be important for the conventional politician-as-performer. In the lived experience of deliberating, who is talking can be as important as what they are saying. This is because in a crowded public

¹⁹ This rose image has undergone many re-imaginings since being introduced in the 1980s by Peter Mandelson. See: (Grice, 2000)

sphere, the personality and position of the speaker affords some credibility to their opinion. Any actor needs to perform (as in to demonstrate) the reason that they are worth listening to.

Unlike less conventional political performers, MPs have a predetermined reason to be listened to by virtue of their role as (re)presentatives. Their performing body represents their constituents and as such their opinion is given credibility by the fact that, in theory at least, it represents the opinions of many. However, if just one person is to be trusted to represent many then the question of who that person is (including what their decision-making criteria are and, in essence, how they will represent them in public) becomes paramount. For Blair and Brown, as leaders, this burden of representation extends to the whole country rather than just their constituents.

4.3.1 The personal and the political: Autobiography, Leadership and Performance

Alongside their identification of themselves as key actors in the historical narrative of the nation, both actors offered small anecdotes about their lives that were distinctly personal rather than political. In what follows I explore this theme by comparing Blair's characterisation of himself in his resignation speech with that of Brown in his conference speech.

In his resignation speech Blair described his youth "in the social revolution of the 60s and 70s" and that his father's career was "cut short by a stroke at the age of 40" (Blair, 2007b). Brown, in his conference speech, told the audience about his childhood as the son of a minister in Kirkaldy, and about eye injury he suffered whilst playing school rugby (Brown, 2007b).

Both actors, it would seem, attempted to present themselves as The Everyman who is flawed, fallible and suffered the same life-traumas as any member of the audience. This juxtaposed with the presentation of themselves as leaders discussed earlier (as The Man, rather than The Everyman), who are epic, almost superhuman characters capable of changing history and of saving the country.

These small pieces of autobiographical information generated a sympathetic character but more importantly they were tools from which to hang the more diffuse concepts of policy. For example, Gordon Brown's rugby injury was used to symbolise the "life-saving power of the NHS" (itself a highly symbolic institution of Britishness), the "liberating power of education" and the fact that "things don't always come easily and there are things worth fighting for" (Brown, 2007b). In performing their own autobiographies Blair and Brown thus linked their personal stories with their political role.

Blair's resignation speech, for example, was framed as a personal conversation with the nation. Blair referred to himself in the first person (the word 'government' is only mentioned twice in the 20 minute piece) and spoke to the nation directly, almost colloquially. This gave the speech a sense of intimacy but also reflected his presidential style of leadership that focused on Blair's individual personality. Moreover, this style of delivery was conducive to deliberation because Blair attempted to communicate with the nation (or, perhaps more specifically, the listening members of the audience) personally and interactively, albeit from a privileged position as leader.

In his resignation speech Blair went on to chart his personal life against the political-historical landscape. He suggested that he is modern and progressive, a “young man” in the revolutionary sixties and seventies who did not see any logic in the “state versus individual” status quo because, he said casually, “none of it made sense to me” (Blair, 2007b). Whilst Brown’s speech promised that things will change, Blair was keen to point out how things had changed as he detailed the improvements in living standards over the last ten years. In some ways, by encouraging the audience to “think back...no, really, think back” to 1997, he tried to resurrect his character from that time (Blair, 2007b). The man who had ‘Things can only get better’ as his theme tune was saying, 10 years later, that they did. In this way Blair’s used his own personal story of his leadership journey as a connecting theme that framed the last ten years of political change and progress.

This leads onto another aspect of his characterisation in his speech, which was his ambition and optimism that, he suggested, have not been dulled to cynicism after 10 years in office. The beginning of his leadership, he said, was a “moment...for sweeping away all the detritus from the past” and in response to criticisms of his expectations being too high he said “to be frank, I would not have wanted it any other way” (Blair, 2007b). Emphasising that he was a man who was willing to “give the impossible a go” and “excited by the opportunities not constantly fretful of the dangers”, Blair suggested that these aspects of his personality had shaped the country under his leadership. Here Blair’s representative role as leader (and indeed as MP) was conceived of not just in terms of copying the intrinsic values of the nation, but preceding them and constructing an optimistic nation that reflected his personality.

Linked to this he emphasised his strength of will. As regards foreign policy, he “[made] our country one that intervened, that did not pass by, or keep out of the thick of it” (Blair, 2007b). This is highly reminiscent of the idea of the Good Samaritan and reflected his Christian values. He did not bow to “the prevailing consensus or the latest snapshot of public opinion” but rather did “what was right for our country” (Blair, 2007b). These aspects of his character helped to reinforce his authenticity as it implied he acted out of deep-seated conviction. This is perhaps in contrast to his 1997 character of Teflon Tony, a highly spun character who could wriggle his way out of any scandal.

This speech also scripted the way in which Blair viewed his position as leader. It portrayed him as a decision-maker, not afraid to take action – “the ultimate obligation is to decide” – and, he told us, this is not an easy thing to do (Blair, 2007b). It was, he said, “hard” to come up with “not an answer, the answer” (Blair, 2007b). At times he painted a picture of being lonely in a position of such power. Constitutionally the Prime Minister is ‘first among equals’ whereas the presidential style of his speech implied that he took these decisions alone. This echoes suggestions that he was a power hungry leader who was renowned for not listening to his cabinet and engaging in so-called ‘sofa government’ (relying on a small group of like-minded advisors rather than deliberating with the cabinet).²⁰ However, he was aware of the critique

²⁰ Some weeks after this resignation speech, Blair delivered his ‘feral media’ speech which developed this theme more fully. For example see: (Peev, 2007; TheFinancialTimes, 2007; TheTimes, 2007)

of “messianic” charged against him and in fact started the speech with “sometimes the only way you conquer power is to set it down” (Blair, 2007b).

This speech thus portrayed a reflective Blair who was proud of his achievements but also humble and self-effacing. In the last term of his premiership and since the Iraq War, Blair became quite defensive, often starting his response to press conference questions with a weary sigh and ‘look...’. In this, one of his last performances, he reminded the country that his job was a difficult one, and that the nation should empathise as well as criticise. He also admitted his imperfections. As he poetically put it, “the vision is painted in the colours of the rainbow, and the reality is sketched in the duller tones of black, white and grey” (Blair, 2007b). This self-effacement reached its climax when he reflected on the Iraq war and made a pre-emptive apology for where he had “fallen short” (Blair, 2007b).

Reflecting on the script as a whole shows that instead of characterising himself as an infallible hero whose bravery, dedication and vision overcame all odds, the Blair represented in this performance was a postmodern hero – someone who made mistakes, someone who was unsure and someone who was constantly self-referential. We might interpret this as a shrewd political move because having criticised himself it was harder for the audience to make those criticisms without sounding repetitive. More importantly, this version of Blair was a more believable character, someone who really represented the ordinary members of the audience. This postmodern approach to leadership is paralleled in popular culture with the traditional representations of masculinity have been re-worked to emphasise fallibility and vulnerability alongside traditional values of strength and self-belief. The recent re-imagining of traditional popular culture heroes like ‘Batman’ (in the 2008 film *The Dark Knight*, directed by Christopher Nolan) and ‘James Bond’

(in the 2006 film *Casino Royale*, directed by Martin Campbell) are interesting cases in point.

Brown's conference speech offered a more direct characterisation than that of Blair discussed above. Whereas Blair's characterisation was implied through a retrospective look at the past, the whole purpose of Brown's speech was to introduce 'Brown the prime minister' as a character to the audience. "This", he said to the audience, "is who I am" (Brown, 2007b). This direct characterisation left less room for interpretation by the audience, they did not have to figure out Brown's character because he simply told them directly.

Of course, whilst the conference speech performance would suggest it was an introduction, Brown's character was already familiar he had been in office for the last 10 years. This direct characterisation in the performance attempted to distance Brown from his previous incarnation as Blair's chancellor and the associated negative image of his moodiness, control freakery and his 'Stalinesque' power manoeuvring (Russell, 2007). It was also an attempt to distance himself and the party from the unpopular Blair and blame any mistakes of the past 10 years on him. This aggressive characterisation could be seen in Brown's multiple references to his autobiography. He spoke of his mother and particularly his father, "the house where [he] lived as a child", "[taking] the school bus to secondary school" and "the words I was taught when I was young" (Brown, 2007b). Through this performance the audience was able to learn a little more of the life story of the man rather than the chancellor, not only who he was but a narrative of how he came to be that way.

His musings on his childhood revealed the importance of morality in his characterisation. In particular, Christianity was referenced through the vehicle of Brown's memories of his father's sermons and he directly linked it to his political principles. The "parable of the talents" led him to reflect that "too many still cannot rise as far as their talents can take them", on child poverty he said "no Bible I have ever read says: 'bring some of the children'", and his father's advice of being "'givers as well as getters'" was his "moral compass" (Brown, 2007b). This strong sense of morality as a decision-factor for action was reminiscent of Blair saying 'I did what I thought was right' and performed the same function. It made each actor appear grounded and substantial rather than concerned with shallowness of party politics and electioneering. They both emphasised conviction rather than charisma even though Blair spoke from a Catholic perspective (with its associations of guilt and forgiveness) and Brown from a Presbyterian one (with its more austere and prudent approach).

Another feature of his character was his desire to listen. Like most of the ideas in this speech, this had a heritage in his brief performance outside Number 10 on the handover day when he said "as Prime Minister I will continue to listen and learn from the British people" (Brown, 2007c). In this speech he proved this true by recounting the stories he had heard – from, for example, John Smeaton the baggage handler at the Glasgow terror attacks, 'Max' the schoolchild who struggled to read, the unnamed Darfur mother whose family was murdered, Liam Fairhurst who won the cancer fundraiser and even, albeit very briefly, Tony Blair who was praised for his contribution to the Northern Irish peace process. Including these stories characterised Brown as humble. Whereas Blair's performance was conceivably self-centred and concerned with his goals, his ambition and his leadership, Brown's was

more outward looking, highlighting his commitment to following the lead of the country and working consensually to achieve this goal.

This idea can be traced in the linguistic style of the speeches. Where Blair (2007b) referred to the nation as 'you', Brown (2007a) more often used a discourse of 'us' and 'we', not just with regards the nation ("this is who we are") but the Labour Party as well ("we are doing what no government has ever done"). This represented a desire to distance himself from Blair's presidential and centralised leadership of the party and the nation. It also characterised him as a down-to-earth leader that was not on a pedestal of individual power alienated from advice but someone willing to change, listen and deliberate.

This performance, in addition to characterising Brown as different to Blair, was also an attempt to distinguish his style and background from that of the popular leader of the Conservative Party in opposition, David Cameron, to whom Brown eventually lost the general election in 2010. In the intervening months between Blair's resignation and the Labour Party conference, there was much media speculation on the prospect of Gordon Brown calling a 'snap' 2007 election to solidify his leadership. In considering this some commentators suggested that Tory leader David Cameron was the natural successor to Blair in terms of both his centrist policies (compared with Brown's perceived leftist approach) and also his performance style in the public sphere – the so-called 'heir to Blair' strategy (Brown, 2007a). Part of creating this distance between the two actors was to use a modernist discourse of authenticity surrounding Gordon Brown. This strategy was reflected in Saatchi and Saatchi's potential advertising slogan for the 2007 election (that in the end was not called): 'no flash, just Gordon' (BBCNews, 2007b).

This theme of 'change' in Brown's speech on entering No 10 was reiterated in his conference speech. "Change" is in fact mentioned 22 times in the speech and reflected Brown's desire to move away not only from the slick characters of Blair and his heir Cameron but to change the way that politics functioned (Brown, 2007b). At the time this was reinforced by inviting members of other parties into his new cabinet and the rumours that there would be a snap general election. Unfortunately for Brown, after his initial popularity he did not, in the end, call an election to legitimise his leadership and allegations of his controlling, unfriendly personality continued so the 'change' that he predicted was not extensive. This reinforces the importance of performing actions as a way of developing and maintaining a coherent character in the public sphere – despite speaking the words of change, Brown did not enact it.

4.4 From text to action: Teflon Tony and Brooding Brown

As Pavis notes, the development of character acting can be viewed as a theory of emotions where “in theatre, actors’ emotions do not need to be real or lived; they must above all be visible, legible, and in compliance with the conventions relating to the representation of feelings...emotions are always manifested by means of a rhetoric of the body” (2003: 56). On this understanding of performance, the actor’s performing body communicates a set of emotions and meanings to the audience. But in artistic performance, whether the actor feels the emotions ‘in reality’ is not as important as generating the representation of those emotions for the audience. An ‘authentic’ performance is judged on the skill with which the actor generates this representation.

There are parallels here with the role of the political representative. The political actor needs to be seen to represent all of their constituents regardless of whether they actually agree with their political opinions. In addition to just ‘being seen’, the political representative’s role is to represent the citizen skilfully within a variety of deliberative settings, whether it is in the traditional argumentation of Parliament or in more informal settings of, for example, television shows like *Newsnight*. The key issue is that political representation is not just a static outcome of voting. MPs do not ‘represent’ simply by being voted into their seat, but rather representation is an active, ongoing practice and, like the artistic performer, it can be judged in terms of its skilfulness. We see examples of this in media analyses of ‘parliamentary performances’ that consider not just what the political actor said, but also how they said it, be it ‘passionately’, ‘sincerely’, ‘angrily’ or ‘competently’. As such, the practice of representation is embodied, concerned with

representing emotion to an extent not appreciated by traditional accounts of deliberation.

The task of 'reading' these legible emotions and meanings is one well-suited to the tools of performance analysis. In his book on *Performance Analysis*, Pavis goes some way to generating an 'anthropology of performance' as he develops a way of analysing body work to include features of vocality, posture, movement, facial expression and proprioception in performance (2003: 65-130). However, it is important to note that the body work cannot be viewed as a fragmented and individual performance but relational to the other systems of signs within the performance such as the mise-en-scene, narrative and performance space.

4.4.1 Teflon Tony and Brooding Brown

Blair's performance style is partly responsible for his image as a consummate political performer. Biographies in the media and in the book market often detail his aptitude for dramatic performance at Fettes College (where he was the lead role in school productions) or his short career as a "rock star" in his university band 'Ugly Rumours' (Seldon, 2004; Wheeler, 2007). Even a cursory look at Blair's performances in the last ten years shows that he is a convincing public speaker who appears at ease in a variety of settings; on the conference hall stage in 1997, speaking direct to cameras following the death of Diana, Princess of Wales and even his infamous 'Am I bovvered?' charity appearance for Comic Relief in 2007 (just weeks before his resignation speech at Trimdon).

Part of the reason for this is that Blair's face lends itself to wide expression and as such he appears to communicate more openly with the audience. Analysing both his resignation speech and his final PMQs, we can see that his expansive smile and mobile eyebrows dominated his face so when he wished to portray emotion the effect was immediately visible (Figure 4.3)



Figure 4.3 Tony Blair performs at final PMQs with Brown in the background. *Photo: BBC Website*

Brown on the other hand, as he said in his conference speech, is blind in one eye and suffers some paralysis down the left side of his face. In comparison to Blair, his face was not mobile at all and it was difficult to read his emotions in his performances - even when he smiled it appeared slightly like an uncomfortable grimace. Whether it is for that reason or not, Brown does not often smile as much as Blair, as this was evident in these performances.

There was a difference in their engagement with the audience as well. Blair's eyes were constantly moving, looking out 'middle-distance' over and

across the audience and only occasionally looking downwards in contemplation. Brown on the other hand looked down to the script for longer periods and when he looked to the audience it was straight ahead. Again, this made Blair seem more engaged with the audience and it allowed them to see his emotions more clearly – in the resignation speech, for example, his eyes glistened with possible tears.

Another engaging characteristic was Blair's hand movements, which were at times palm-open towards the audience (see Figure 4.4) or at others an emphatic fist shape that he offers out to the audience and then back into his body. More than just providing emphasis and meaning to his words (the fist shape drawn close to his body could be interpreted as a symbol of his heart-felt, embodied conviction and authenticity), these movements made him look confident and comfortable.



Figure 4.4 Blair gestures to the audience at his resignation speech. *Photo: The Guardian*

Brown used a similar technique but with less confidence. At the start of his No 10 performance his hands were awkwardly balled by his sides or clasped in front of him and they only relaxed half-way through the performance (Figure 4.5). Whilst this made him seem more authentic in an unscripted

sense, it also made him seem shifty, nervous and less approachable. However, a few months later in his conference speech performance he was much more expressive. He used extensive hand gestures including pointing, sweeping his arms out over the audience (Figure 4.6) and moving back and forth towards the podium as he made a joke. Brown's uncomfortable performance style more generally highlights that alongside criticism of politicians as 'slick performers', political actors are also criticised if they are not able to give seamless performances. Brown's unapproachable nature and unsuccessful performances in less formalised deliberative settings (such as morning television shows) was a persistent and damaging criticism throughout his premiership.



Figure 4.5 Brown's arrival at No 10 on Handover Day, joined by wife Sarah Brown. *Photo: BBC Website*



Figure 4.6 Brown gestures to the audience at the Labour Party conference speech. Photo: BBC Website

Finally, Blair and Brown differed in the way they spoke. Brown's tone was measured and his deep voice added a sense of authority (reminiscent of Thatcher's performance style as noted by Atkinson in his book *Our Masters' Voices* (1988)) but did not express as much variety in tone as that of Blair. This made Brown seem rational and grounded compared with the more emotional Blair. The theme of Brown as a Scottish Enlightenment hero versus the postmodern Blair was reinforced by Brown's Scottish accent as compared with Blair's upper-class English accent. Brown's script endorsed this idea by focusing on his working class, Presbyterian childhood which was implicitly compared with the private school-attending and privileged Blair and David Cameron. This highlights how, like the narratives discussed earlier, the body work of these political performers was contextually dependent on who they were acting against. In attempting to conform, as Pavis has suggested above, to the "conventions in relation to the representation of feeling", Blair and Brown acted against the conventions already set by a range of public figures, from other Members of Parliament

past and present to, increasingly, other actors in the public sphere, for example the actor Martin Sheen's extremely popular portrayal of a political representative in the television drama *The West Wing*.

Stylistically, Blair punctuated his speech with long pauses and the tone of his delivery was slightly unsure. The pauses not only gave the audience time to contemplate what he said but they allowed Blair to incorporate more physical aspects in his performance, such as looking away in contemplation or looking out at the audience. Indeed throughout his premiership Blair often reverted to these physical techniques to express his sincerity. They certainly lessened the feeling that his performance was rehearsed or scripted, especially when compared to Brown's obviously scripted conference performance (he frequently looked down to the script in front of him) with its business-like delivery.

Brown's conference speech performance, whilst acting against public memories of Tony Blair's persuasive 'sincerity style', also implicitly competed with David Cameron's conference speech to be performed the following week. In, perhaps, a style befitting the 'heir of Blair', Cameron broke with conference tradition and delivered his entire speech 'impromptu' with the assistance of only a handful of aide memoires. This allowed him the freedom to move around the stage and also to claim a subversive sort of authenticity: "it might be a bit messy. But it will be me", he claimed (Cameron, 2007).

However, Brown's approach of overtly reading from his script, whilst traditional, allowed him to offer a more complex speech. This was in keeping with his image of an un-spun, policy-driven political actor, an antithesis to Cameron's informal, media-friendly persona with its

associations to the unpopular Blair. Here again there is an interesting interplay between authenticity and representation. Brown's adherence to the tradition of reading a complex speech from a script was a clear sign that his actions were a performance. But it also signified his authenticity as a 'serious' political actor who was honest about the scripted nature of his words. David Cameron's lack of a physical script did not detract from its overtly rehearsed quality and in some ways it reinforced his image as a slick political performer. Somewhat paradoxically, the presence of the script as an overt sign of Brown's performance made it seem less like 'a performance' in the negative sense of manipulating the audience. This highlights the complexity of the performer and audience interaction beyond what is 'real' and 'faked'.

Whilst Brown looked to his script for his 'lines', his physical performance in the conference speech offered a range of emotions that engaged with the substance of the text and helped to generate his public persona. Perhaps to make him seem more personally accessible, he offered anger when discussing the 7/7 London terror attack, excitement and passion about the future and even, somewhat surprisingly given his reputation as 'Brooding Brown', humour (reflecting on the job of Prime Minister) and happiness upon leaving the podium to rapturous applause (Figure 4.7) So, like Blair and indeed Cameron, the embodiment of the text into actions was an important part of his performance.



Figure 4.7 Brown smiling as he leaves conference with wife Sarah. *Photo: Telegraph Website*

4.5 Conclusion: Performing Politicians: Representation, Authenticity and Ritual

Exploring the metaphor of politics-as-performance in this case has highlighted how conventional political representation contains highly performative elements as political actors attempt to make visible the practice of political representation and generate their public personas.

This process of 'showing the doing' of representation was unpacked using the metaphor of politics-as-performance as I explored the transformations each political actor undertook in their performances. In this case of conventional politics, transformations were achieved through the careful staging of major events of national importance. Blair, in his resignation speech, chose a personal venue that reflected his representative commitment to his constituents and staged a reflective, intimate event that prompted positive retrospection of his ten years as leader. Brown's conference speech was staged to reinforce his institutional position as leader of the Labour Party and his actions were designed to reiterate his commitment to change and difference from the old 'spin' politics of Blair and Cameron. The handover was staged at the national level and was designed around the rituals of the transfer of political power, using space and the ritual structure as symbolically resonant devices to reinforce their authority. In each performance, it was not just the scripting but the successful execution of the staged event as a whole coupled with the skill of the performer's physical performance that generated a successful demonstration of political representation.

The staging created a boundary between what was on and off stage. Each performer maintained control over what was made visible in the practice of representation and what was not. Perhaps indicative of this, I noted the irreducibility of most of the live performances for the political actor. This was reflected in the discourse of 'liveness' in the mediated performances and the importance of showing the political actors 'being there' in particular locations. As we shall see in the following chapter, this importance of physically being in particular locations is symbolically resonant of the representative link between citizen and political actor. As such it was structurally highlighted and made clearly visible in their political performances in order to reinforce their authority.

In this case, perhaps more than any other in this thesis, the control over audience participation (in terms of access to the live performance) was high. This theme of control over what was and was not seen was also reflected in the mediated performance as certain scenes, for example during the handover day, remained private and unseen to the audience. The politics-as-performance metaphor has thus highlighted these boundaries of visibility in the public sphere. It also showed that the conventional political actors maintained a high level of control over this by carefully managing the staging of events themselves without much competition from other political actors. As such, in this performance the political actors developed an empowered and controlled relationship with the audience. As I move on to explore less conventional political actors, I argue that their attempts at staging and maintaining this boundary

between the visible and the hidden are increasingly challenged both by other political actors and by audiences.

Another theme that this case has highlighted was that the process of staging actually added an authenticity and authority to the transformations of the political actors. Performance made their actions and transformations more 'real', rather than the other way around. This offers an alternative to critiques of politics-as-performance and its so-called trivialisation of politics. It suggests that staging and ritual, when used in the proper context and approached skilfully, reinforce the legitimacy of political actors as it demonstrates the 'doing' of political representation and increases the transparency of elite politics.

However, I also explored the theme of trivialisation that the metaphor implies when I analysed the content of the speeches. There were two closely interrelated themes– that of autobiography of the political actor and their relationship to the nation – and the performances were structured as the persona of the political actor addressing the nation. This holistic addressing of the audience (as the entire nation) from the context of the individual performer reflected an interactive relationship with the citizen. Coming back to representation, in this case both political actors strongly reinforced their connection to the electorate by highlighting their representative role for the nation, even though they were also leaders. This is perhaps more egalitarian than a traditionally elitist approach where the nation is conceived as following its leader. It also highlights an interesting, performance-based aspect of deliberation. If we consider that Parliament is the natural home of traditional deliberation of the

rational form, we see that even here in this most conventional of deliberative contexts, who is speaking is relevant to what they are saying. Thinking about 'who' in this case has shown that the personal lives and stories of the actors relate to the nation and the representative actions that they will take (or in Blair's case already had taken). Representation, as a mediation between the personal and the political in the practice of deliberation, involves stories of autobiography.

This deliberation on the surface appears interactive in the sense that the political actors performed as individuals in conversation with the citizen. However, the careful staging and control these political actors enacted over the space and content of their performances suggested a lack of interaction with the audience on equal terms. The agenda of these performances was to a larger extent set by the actors and their wider control over the creation and execution of the staged event. In the next case study, I reflect on this privileged position that these conventional political actors hold by virtue of their powerful representative role as I compare them with political actors who are not yet in power.

Chapter 5:

Performing Elections: Circus, Presence and Deliberation in the 2007 SNP election campaign

Election campaigns, particularly at a national level, are perhaps unparalleled as times of frenzied activity in the conventional political calendar. If the political speech is a politician performer's soliloquy then the election campaign is a big, noisy circus act featuring the ensemble cast. Election campaigns are bigger in both scope and scale than other conventional political events, such as the party conference, parliamentary debate or even the prime ministerial inauguration discussed in the previous chapter, because they concern the authoritative competition for, and eventual handover of, state power between party groups. They are routine events that show the workings of representative democracy but at the same time they are unpredictable in terms of both process and outcome. The election campaign is, in many ways, a liminal performance in the sense that it subverts existing authorities whilst reinforcing the overarching structure of representative democracy.

This mixture of the routine and unpredictable, of expected unexpectedness, is reminiscent of the conventional theatrical performance. The audience knows that there will be a show at a specific time but they do not necessarily know how the story will play out. Similarly, the election campaign, constrained as it is both by democratic law and convention, will officially last for a defined period of time (in the UK, by convention the short campaign starts

roughly 3 weeks preceding Election Day) but the actual story plays out in real time. Unlike scripted theatrical performance, however, the story of the election campaign is written with the enactment of the performance itself through the various twists and turns of the campaigning season and the ending is unknown at the beginning.

So, we can see that the election campaign is an area where the performance metaphor resonates. Not only are there the traditional elements of drama and suspense in the conflict between parties to win the prize but the intensity of the competition ensures an element of spectacle and showmanship, as a cursory look at any election campaign will reveal. However, the liminal nature of the event means that the performance style is different to the Blair/Brown case. Where in that case the action was carefully staged and the script was generally adhered to, the election campaign has a more ludic style of performance that contains subversive elements of unpredictability and chaos, revealed perhaps by the common use of the 'circus' metaphor in the political vernacular.

Throughout this chapter I focus on the idea of ludic performance – using the more familiar metaphor of the election campaign as circus – to consider how the political actors in question are represented in the public sphere and how they shape the nature of devolved deliberation. In relation to the concept of deliberative democracy, we might view the election campaign as the place where deliberative and representative forms of democracy meet. Political actors offer competing representations of themselves in the public sphere, out-with the conventional deliberations in Parliament or consultations, in an attempt to win an officially representative role.

As I suggest in this chapter, the spectacle and showmanship of an election campaign is connected to the highly interactive relationship that the audience has with the performance, particularly through the action of voting. The role of the audience as potential voters invokes the idea of playing a game and of two sides scoring points for the benefit of the audience re-action. As such the election performance requires the audience to be spect-actors, to become performers themselves of a specific action after viewing it. It is also constantly referential to the public performance that is voting day – a performance that outstrips the campaign in scale and importance.

The metaphor of ludic performance is especially helpful in understanding this aspect of the election process as a lived experience. Not only do circus performances have a more interactive, bottom-up relationship with their audiences but they are also highly accessible in a physical and an intellectual sense; unlike the opera which has barriers to entry (for example financial and, arguably, educational) anyone can go to the circus and understand what is happening. As I suggest in this chapter, this theme of accessibility and inclusivity is reflected in the election campaign performance. Moreover, circus performances blend serious, authoritative performances with subversive, playful forms. The idea of ludic performance, following Caillois's helpful exploration, encompasses the two contradictory elements we see in the election campaign; *paidia* or "the frolicsome and impulsive exuberance" of free play and *ludus*, the "arbitrary, imperative and purposely tedious conventions" (Caillois 1962: 13).

5.01 Case study: SNP election campaign 2007

Election campaigns are routine and planned events in the political calendar, ranging from the national to the local and occasionally supranational. However I have chosen to examine the national election for a devolved nation, using the case of Scottish National Party (SNP) election campaign for the 3 May 2007 elections to the devolved Scottish parliament.

Looking at a devolved case study has a number of benefits. It allows for implicit and explicit comparison with the whole UK national case I considered in the previous chapter and facilitates comparison with the other UK-based cases explored in this thesis. It is also a good selection on its own merits. The Scottish history of national identity is interesting and highly performative in cultural and political terms. It provides a point of comparison with the politician-as-performer trying to use their body as a site of resonance for positive nationalist feeling, as well as contrasting with the performances seen in the Scotland-based Faslane case and London-based terror case to come. The SNP also demonstrated a commitment to deliberative democracy in its time in government, manifest for example in its subsequent consultation entitled 'A National Conversation' {Scottish Government}.

More generally, in the Scottish case where the devolution process is relatively recent, each election process acts as a 'test' on the new system and as such the idea of the performance metaphor is more interesting. This is because there is not such a heritage of previous

historical performances of authority and so each election performance is a drafting of future rituals and a creation of authority by these means. This mixture of newness and iterative authority is an interesting theme which the performance metaphor allows us to explore throughout this thesis.

In this case the unit of study is the party more generally and the campaign performance that it enacted more specifically. Whilst I consider 'the SNP party' as a unit, it must be noted that there are rivalries and competitions for leading roles within that. However, unlike the first case where individual performers' characterisation literally embodied the entire performance – a sort of soliloquy to the nation – this was an ensemble performance from a team consisting of politicians but also supporters, campaigners and media sources.

Although in practice the nature of modern political communications is one of constant campaigning, 'the short campaign' starts roughly three weeks before Election Day (McNair, 1999). As it is the agreed start of the show, the time period of the research is from 12 April 2007, when the SNP launched their election manifesto, until election day on 3 May 2007. In addition I draw on previous material for contextual background.

The brief narrative of the campaign is as follows. The SNP ran a successful campaign based around the key slogan 'It's Time'. This implied a positive conception of Scottish national identity and marked a departure from previous unsuccessful campaigns centred on negative or 'othered' identity. It was led by the highly visible pairing of Alex Salmond as First minister and Nicola Sturgeon as

Deputy under the direction of veteran campaigner Angus Robertson. It was the most expensive campaign in the election, costing almost £280,000 more than that of the Labour Party. The SNP spent a total of £1,383,462 (according to the figures released by the Electoral Commission), up from £473,107 in the 2003 election (a rise of 192.4%) and with most spending going on political broadcasts, advertising and mailshots (TheElectoralCommission, 2007a).

The campaign featured a number of interesting and unique techniques: the setting up of SNPtv, an online campaign TV station; an extensive use of 'expert' supporters from the celebrity and business community such as Sean Connery; the use of cultural events such as the Gig for Scotland that showcased young Scottish musicians and artists; promotional transport devices in particular Salmond's helicopter tour of the country; and the hiring of the PR agency Golley Slater to run a professional 'presidentialised' campaign. The Labour Party was the SNP's main competitor but lost out due to a mixture of policy decisions, the unpopularity of Tony Blair and the generally negative campaigning from the increasingly desperate Labour camp.²¹ In the end, the SNP were the 'winners' of the election game by controlling almost half the seats in Parliament and forming a government in a hastily negotiated coalition with two Green Party members. It is important to realise that this is a very particular view of the story as a performance and I am certainly imposing a unity on the case by focusing on the weeks of 'official campaigning'. However, going back to the objectives of the research,

²¹ As Blair himself suggested, Scottish voters used the national elections to 'give him a kick out the door' before he left office later that year. (Macleod, 2007)

the point is not to identify why the SNP won but to use the metaphor of politics-as-performance to describe the process.

Before moving into the case in detail, another general point to mention is the issue of the script and the pace of the campaign. As we shall see, there was a lot of scripting in the lead up to the manifesto launch (especially from the team at Golley Slater) but the pace of the performance in terms of activities and press releases remained fairly constant. Once the period of official campaigning began, the pace of activities picked up immeasurably and, whilst always quite frenetic, it climbed a sharp peak in the final ten days. This was because the script was subject to quick re-writes and new additions were made in response to other performances from the campaigns of other political parties. The SNP election performance had to be constantly self-referential and reflexive in order to react to these other performances. As such, there was tense competition throughout the campaign between the SNP strategists, the media and the other political parties to control the staging process of this performance.

5.1 Shifting performance spaces: the travelling show

The election performance was, like the circus, a travelling show that travelled to, and performed at, many different locations. The concept of travelling players is not, of course, a recent one. The European history of performance, from the late medieval travelling players to the tour diaries of modern orchestras, contains within it a tradition of bringing the show to the audience or, more colloquially, of 'getting the show on the road'. Not only does the practice of moving from performance space to performance space have an effect on both the form that the performance takes and its relationship to a constantly changing audience context, it also requires a particular way of living. Those involved in creating the performance find themselves in a constantly transient state, removed from the world of 'everyday life'. A travelling show is, in some ways, a self contained performance world that briefly collides with the everyday and then moves on.

In relation to the circus metaphor, there are two performances happening concurrently when we consider a performance on tour – the actual show of the performance event and also the wider performance of 'travelling' which describes the process of moving the entire performance (set, actors and backstage functionaries) from place to place. As Carmeli suggests in his analysis of circus ecology, "circus performers travel because their travelling is part of the circus performance". There is a way of "living as circus" that is symbolically resonant for both performers and audiences (1987: 219).

There was a very similar process and practice in the SNP election performance and the idea of being 'on the campaign trail'. On the one hand, there were the performance events of the 'campaign visits' (such as Nicola Sturgeon's visit to Govan Portal or Alex Salmond's address at the University of Aberdeen). On the other hand, there was the ongoing performance of the campaign as it travelled up and down the country. The campaign performance as a whole consisted of the campaign visits strung together in a narrative. If we unpack the idea of a campaign trail further, we might note that even the words suggest a linear mobility from space to space, the 'trail' being a path that the narrative of the campaign followed, both metaphorically and spatially throughout the country.

However, the travelling show of the election campaign was more high-tech than a traditional circus. The performers on the campaign trail were constantly updated on campaign developments in real time through the use of communications technologies such as phones and email. As such, the trail was not a set path that was predetermined but could be subject to change according to the successes and failures of each performance and indeed the counter-performances of the other parties. In this way the SNP election performance was structurally different to the Blair-Brown case where the performance was not updated in real time and stayed true to the original plan.

In many ways, space and time were innately linked in this performance. The mobility of the SNP travelling show set the campaign time apart from other political events and privileged its importance. The difficulty and inconvenience of travelling and the

implied arduousness of doing that made this performance seem more important and worthy of an audience, as well as distinguishing it from other performances. As a key actor, SNP deputy leader Nicola Sturgeon said at the pre-campaign briefing on 28 March 2007, “[The SNP] will work hard over the next 36 days to earn the trust of the Scottish people” (SNP, 2007a). So we see that the 36-day campaign was set apart as a time of performance, a time that was qualitatively different from other times in the political calendar and that meant that space would be used in a different way.

It is important to note that whilst the blanket media coverage and leafleting made it seem like the campaign was ‘everywhere’, in certain cases the bulk of campaigning was in fact focused on several key swing constituencies. This has become conventional for modern election campaigns which are informed by market polling of voting intentions and can thus concentrate their efforts on key seats. In the case of this campaign these were seats in the three broad areas of Fife, Dundee and Aberdeen (Fraser, 2007). There were particular battles to be won against the two main competitors as well. For example, the SNP needed to win the key Labour constituencies such as Govan, Cumbernauld, Aberdeen Central, Dundee West and also take Banff and Buchan from the Scottish Liberal Democrats. So, like the circus, the mobility of the campaign performance was not random but scripted by the audiences that the SNP needed to meet and pay special attention to.

This highlights the importance for political actors of actually physically being in a certain location as it would seem that the concept of the travelling SNP show privileged the ‘live’ in terms of

audience participation. Reflecting on Peggy Phelan's work, we might consider that the ephemeral live performance necessitates a more effective audience-performance interaction as sharing the same space and time leads to a more engaged and responsive audience that is out-with the mistrusted mediatised world of "representations of representations" (1993: 1-7). Moreover, considering the spatial aspects of both deliberative and representative democracy there is a need for rhetorical territoriality, using the performance space to reiterate in a physical way the idea of "common ground" (Laib, 1985).

In the wider, mediatised public sphere, though, putting the political show on the road in this way was symbolically resonant for the SNP performers in terms of their interaction with the audience. Rather than the alienation of the London performance space in the Blair/Brown case, the travelling show reflected a more decentralized form of deliberation where political actors like Salmond and Sturgeon physically moved towards the citizen audience and gave live performances from those locations. The spatial link between political actor and represented citizen was reinforced not necessarily by the political actors' live performances themselves (although this was no doubt an effective strategy for those live audiences) but by the display of their representation at both the national and the local level that was reflected by physically being in those places.

Moreover, leading on from this theme, moving their performance to a selection of key swing seats meant that the SNP campaign performance was enacted in spaces where the issue of conflict was most resonant. The space of contested constituencies thus acted as a

sort of spectacular battleground, very different from Blair and Brown's safe locations filled with party supporters.

5.1.2 Transformations of Space

The transitory nature of the campaign meant that interesting locations were used in the SNP performance. Unlike Blair's resignation speech that was centred in the single location of Trimdon for example, the extended time and mobility of the campaign meant that a range of locations were used to move the plot forward and to insert the SNP campaign into a very crowded public sphere. The performance spaces that were chosen were done so for maximum symbolic and creative effect. By appearing in the high street of a small Fife town, for example, Salmond was a man of the people rather than a 'smug' ruler (a common critique of Salmond's presentation style in newspapers at the time) and reinforced the ordinariness of the SNP (Nicoll, 2007). On the other hand, staging Scotland's Big Party in the trendy urban venue of Glasgow's ABC suggested that the SNP was a youthful and modern party that appealed to the younger generation of swing voters. Finally, landing the SNP campaign helicopter in the middle of a field in Rosyth gave the campaign performance a sense of glamour, importance and newsworthiness. Put simply, the constantly shifting locations both supported and scripted the plot of the campaign and appealed to different target audiences. For the travelling show, politics could be done 'everywhere', not just within the confines of Parliament.

Another interesting point to mention about the performance spaces is that the actual details of locations were not widely publicised. The details of the SNP campaign in general were necessarily secretive because of the competition with the counter-performances from the other political parties. Even the places that the campaign intended to go were kept quiet until the live event and efforts were made, in specific cases, to hide the planning stages and present the performance as spontaneous. For example, Salmond's helicopter visit to Rosyth in the later stages of the campaign was billed by SNPtv as a surprise 'drop in visit to the people of Rosyth'. It was in fact clearly well planned with the media and supporters out in the field acting as the audience.

Again, visits like this had a similarity to the circus – "the actual appearance of the Big Top is traditionally patterned as a 'surprise' – expected unexpectedness" despite the fact that the coming of the circus to town is often planned months in advance and requires much planning with the local councils (Carmeli, 1987: 237). With the election campaign as a whole we see the mixing of planned convention with the idea of dynamic mobility and surprise, *ludus* and *paidia*. By hiding the elements of planning and PR the campaign performance seemed more authentic and more reliable. Going back to Salmond's Rosyth field incident, it gave the impression that his public support was so strong and wide-ranging that anywhere he went he was greeted with cheering SNP supporters.

The Rosyth field event highlights another way in which this performance is redolent of a circus and this is in the art of 'billing'.

The SNP hired the large national PR agency Golley Slater to work on the campaign and one of their major inputs was a generalised rebranding of the party including developing a new logo with a more toned down yellow colouring (Dommett, 2008: 4). This colour appeared throughout the campaign performance, from the logo on the SNP helicopter, to the billboard posters, to the car stickers and website downloadables.

This consistency made the SNP travelling show instantly recognisable and even the technologies of transport become symbolic parts of the performance. The SNP helicopter flying overhead became a signal that the show was coming. It acted as an advertisement but also as a mode of signification that the performance world was coming or here already. As Carmeli says about circuses “it is well known among circus travellers that circus depends on the ‘art of billing’. The billing and publicity, through the intensity and volume of its proclamation, does not only inform but...turns the community into a context for circus.” (Carmeli, 1987: 224). This resonates with the SNP performance, where the helicopter or leaflet distributors were often the visible prelude to the arrival of a key actor. This idea could be seen clearly in the Rosyth helicopter landing. The field was dominated by an enormous SNP carpeting flag and dotted with roughly 20 supporters with banners and flags. Watching the video footage of the event on SNPtV, you could also see journalists with cameras within the frame and really appreciate how the billing was not just a functionary tool to inform the public, but created a relevant backdrop for the performance. This is in sharp contrast to the conventional performances of Blair and Brown in the

previous chapter who enacted very few transformations of space during the handover and focused on the specificity and uniqueness that the symbolic settings of Westminster provided.

At the beginning of the campaign the SNP did not have an explicit media supporter in any of the national newspapers. Much of the extensive campaign budget was therefore spent on this 'billing' via a series of high visibility advertisements in the form of billboards, leaflets, posters and mailshots. These were focused on various locations throughout key constituencies, notably the key commuter routes between Glasgow and Edinburgh and throughout Fife. Such was their prominence that in key constituency locations such as Kelvin, for example, there was an almost blanketing effect where each lamppost or billboard had election posters on it, including some massive ones on the side of buildings near common locations such as supermarkets.

This leads to the question of how the use of space was transformed for the audience. Given the blanketing effect of the coverage, from the posters and distributors on the local high streets to the leaflets coming through the front door and even the helicopter in the sky, there was a sense in which this performance was forced on the audience. Coupled with the extensive news coverage and live events throughout the relatively short period of 36 days the campaign performance dominated the public sphere and sometimes in a disruptive way. Whereas in the previous chapter, the political actors confined their performances to one, often purpose-built building, in this case in their efforts to insert themselves into the public sphere, the political actors actually risked alienating their

audience by disrupting the citizen's use of space and transforming it completely. The election campaign performance was thus a step closer towards a more extreme and disruptive transformation of space that I explore in the later chapters which examine cases of less conventional political performance.

5.1.3 Performing Scottishness

The constant mobility of the travelling show was symbolic of the SNP's conceptualisation of national identity in devolved Scotland. As a Scottish party with a separatist nationalist agenda, it was even more important for the campaign performance spaces to resonate positive ideas about 'Scottishness' over 'Britishness'. Historically, the SNP had lost elections (1992, for example and particularly following the association with extremism and anti-Englishness in the 1980s) because the concept of independence was pushed too harshly or in an unpopular manner on, for example, racist or at least ethnic grounds (Lynch, 2002). So, a key theme of this campaign was 'Independence Lite' where the idea of disruptive independence was sidelined in favour of a positive nationalist campaign.²²

The SNP campaign was thus an attempt at nation-building, constructing a national identity that was not just a negative 'other' to British national identity but that was independent and outward looking. As a civic nationalist party many of the SNP arguments for

²² We see this idea echoed in the subsequent SNP government's agenda of "Devo-Plus". (Brown, 2009)

independence rested upon the physical territory of Scotland and the citizens' rights to self-determination. This idea of self-determination within the Scottish territory was reinforced by the travelling show of the campaign. By taking the political show to Scottish locations and audiences the SNP performers privileged the importance of deliberating at this devolved national level. Coming back to the circus metaphor, the SNP performance reflected a metaphorical Big Tent of national identity where admission to the show was inclusive, classless and populist compared with the controlled and distant spaces of London and the UK parliament. This was reflected in the media coverage at the time which pointed out that Labour relied primarily on staff from its London office to coordinate its campaign whereas the SNP was not torn in that way. As an opposition party it had plenty of time to plan the campaign from its main office in Edinburgh (Currie, 2007).

In addition to visiting multiple locations, the SNP performers enacted transformations of space that reinforced this construction of an independent national identity. The Saltire flag, for example, was used extensively, reflecting how this method of expressing Scottish national identity does not have racist associations implied with flag waving in other parts of the UK (especially with regard to the St George Cross flag). The pattern of The Saltire was echoed in the SNP logo design, with repetition of the x shape as a continuous line (Figure 5.1). The yellow colour that has come to symbolise the SNP is one that is not present on the British flag at all (even though it has an unfortunate similarity to the yellow used by the LibDems). There are many other interpretations one might make of this colouring –

sunrise, light and new beginning, positivity and general neutrality as regards ideology if we compare it to the Blue of Conservatives or the Red of Labour. This indicated the SNP's desire to differentiate itself from British parties and by extension generate a new, positive image of Scotland itself.



Figure 5.1 SNP Logo. Image: SNP website



Figure 5.2 Salmond's chopper with SNP logo. Image: Author's own, SNPTv

However, throughout the campaign the SNP performance still had to negotiate between the traditional hegemonic images of Scottish national identity, which had some ethnic basis and centred around a sense of anti-Englishness, and its forging of a new one that was both different but connected. An example of this was seen in the party's

negotiation of the tension between the North and the South of Scotland (that is also roughly associated with an urban and rural divide). The rural north is traditionally pro-SNP and has a more separatist leaning than the urban south, especially in the context of the history of the Highland Clearances, the Highland clans and even the history of tartan.

For the 2007 campaign the swing seats were more generally in the south of the country so the majority of campaign performances, certainly by the key actors Salmond and Sturgeon, were centred there. Sturgeon's visit, early in the campaign (30/03/07) to the Govan Portal project and Working Rite makes the SNP position clear – "I have no doubt that Scotland, Glasgow and Govan can be wealthier with the example of success that this initiative provides and an SNP government will support and encourage such schemes" (SNP, 2007a). In both her words and her location in central Glasgow, Sturgeon tried to present a holistic and unified Scotland at the national, civic and local level. Similarly, staging Scotland's Big Party in the metropolitan hub of Glasgow sent an important message about the SNP campaign. It communicated that the SNP was not an irrelevant and outmoded nationalist party of 'tartanry' but in fact a modern civic nationalist party that could appeal to voters in multi-ethnic, metropolitan Scotland as well as in traditional areas of SNP support.

Looking at the performance spaces of the campaign has shown that in bringing the political show out into the country, the SNP campaign performed the spatial boundaries of the nation by holding a mirror up to those locations. These temporary performance spaces

were used both as backdrops to gain attention in the public sphere and as symbolically resonant icons for the nationalist agenda. This interactivity of bringing the political show out of formal, controlled buildings like Parliament or The Scottish Government building and into the public locations of towns and villages also reflected a commitment to devolved deliberation at the national level and fostered a more interactively representative relationship with the audience.

5.2 Celebrity performers: *star presence*

For the conventional performances of Blair and Brown, the process of characterisation was important in creating a believable and convincing 'hero of the people'. In the SNP campaign performance, whilst the cast was much larger because every SNP candidate was a performer, there was more similarity with the Blair/Brown case than one might expect. Due to the tactic of 'presidentialising' the campaign, it focused on the two leading roles of Alex Salmond as First Minister and Nicola Sturgeon as his Deputy with the persuasive power being centred in their personal characteristics and charisma. However, interestingly, the SNP campaign performance also employed a large supporting cast of others out-with the party, including actual celebrity performers of sports, music and film, and also 'experts' from the wider community. In this section, I explore the process of characterisation for these figures and consider how they interact with each other and as objects within the narrative of the campaign.

5.2.1 *Presence, Power and Charisma*

Before moving on to the specifics of the case it is pertinent to consider the concepts of 'charisma' and 'presence' in greater detail. The idea of charisma is notoriously controversial. Whilst often viewed as ephemeral and enigmatic, we might start by considering it

as a mixture of persuasiveness and likeability. Put more crudely, the speaker (or performer) adds persuasive value to the message by being the medium.

The study of charisma is wide ranging and varied, from examinations of religious personalities and leaders (Werbner and Basu, 1998), to anthropological accounts of ritual in witch doctors (Tambiah, 1981) and more recently in organisational and leadership studies offering psychological accounts and key characteristics of leaders (Bryman, 1992). It was also famously considered by Weber as a type of authority where possession of a certain, exceptional personality was the legitimate reason for an individual being treated as a leader. Indeed, we might consider the professionalisation of the SNP election campaign through PR and marketing techniques as an example that supports Weber's argument about the routinisation of charismatic authority (Weber and Parsons, 1964).

Of course, there has long been a connection between charisma and performance, as the Ancient Greek art of sophistry would suggest. The centrality of the actor in delivering a successful message invites the idea that performance techniques could be used to generate a representation of 'charisma' in an individual. This is especially interesting given the focus in this thesis on political information in the context of deliberative democracy and the idea of non-violent, non-bargaining and non-threatening persuasion.

Performance theory offers theatrical techniques of mimicry and character-building exercises that allow actors to perform a representation of 'charisma'. It also adds to the debate with the

concepts of 'presence' and the role of a 'star'. As Schechner notes, "being a star is to be a person whose very presence transcends whatever activity s/he may be absorbed in" (2003: 232). There are a number of interesting ideas here. First, the idea of presence encompasses a holistic approach to the issue of charisma as an embodied activity. Presence is not just concerned with reading lines from a script but with becoming a performer, of generating a representation. Linked to this, the idea of presence concerns physically being 'present' in a performance space and being looked at. In this way it concerns the relationship between audience and performer. In fact much of the privileging of the live in Performance Studies is centred around the notion that the transcendental presence of the actors does not survive mediatisation. Presence is thus conceptualised as a phenomenal quality that the audience sees in a performer's body, a so-called 'stage presence' where their simple presence on the stage is transformative and engaging.

The second idea to look at more closely is the metaphor of being 'a star'. If we unpack it we might think of a star as many things; beautiful, aurific, aspirational (in the sense that we 'look up' to stars) and above all a light in the darkness. Stardom implies separateness, of shining out from a dark backdrop. Schechner, describing the presence of a 'devil dancer' exorcist in Sri Lanka, says that he was "a conduit for power...a bright light almost obscured by obstacles in a long tunnel" (2003: 231). In relation to deliberative democracy, we might consider that presence or charisma is the alluring quality that makes the actor a shining light in the crowded darkness of the public sphere, something visible, a star. However, charisma and the power

of presence also have negative associations. The circus metaphor implies this concern because of its links to the slightly grotesque, subversive practice of clowning and the edge of villainy in the performance of many Masters of Ceremonies.

Moving on to the political context, it is clear that ideas of presence, charisma and star quality are also evident in the critique of a mediatised democracy where politics is 'reduced' to what we consider more trivial characteristics of appearance and appearing rather than doing. In his article *Celebrity Politicians* (2004), John Street highlights this issue in discussing the two types of celebrity politician: conventional representatives who have the notoriety of 'stardom' in the public sphere (type 1), and the stars of popular culture who have political ambitions and an unconventional role as political representatives (type 2). Critiques of both types of political celebrity reflect the uncomfortable relationship that audiences have with performers as charismatic manipulators of reality. If people are able to represent charisma and we agree that charisma is a form of persuasive power then this raises the question of how trustworthy these actors are as political representatives, aside from their qualitative performance in that role. However Street offers an interesting defence of celebrity politicians as performers in the public sphere, arguing that both are legitimately representative as constructors of political reality.

5.2.2 Leading actors: Salmond and Sturgeon

The two leading actors in the SNP campaign performance, Alex Salmond and Nicola Sturgeon, performed the starring roles, delivered the most lines and gained the most attention. This strategy differed from that of previous SNP campaigns and reflected the desire to run a 'presidential' campaign focused on the personality of the party leader and their running mate. Thus, the majority of press releases or performance events within the campaign featured Salmond or Sturgeon to the extent that some media sources jokingly wondered where the other candidates were (Currie, 2007).

In the context of representative democracy, running a presidential campaign can be said to disrupt the representative link to territory. Indeed Blair's resignation speech highlighted this as he attempted to reassert territorial representation after operationalising a highly presidential style of leadership. In theory the voter chooses a specific representative to re-present their views in Parliament whereas a presidential style campaign highlights the role of the party, and moreover, of the party leadership in political decision-making rather than the constituency link. In this way, then, the SNP campaign performance was less concerned with individuals than with top-down organisation where, returning to the circus theme, Salmond was the Master of Ceremonies and Sturgeon was his glamorous assistant.

However, from the SNP perspective, having a presidential campaign was a winning formula. In a crowded public sphere such

as the mediatised democracy of the UK it makes sense to focus on a few stars that shine in the darkness rather than the more complex characterisation required for plot-driven performances. As Ana Langer suggests there is a trend in the print media of more analysis of political leaders' personal lives and so it was a good strategy to structure the campaign performance accordingly (2007; 2009). Within this kind of organisational structure for the performance, having presence becomes an even more important property than if the campaign had been policy or local candidate-led because all efforts are focused on the lead actors. Salmond and Sturgeon's partnership was the keystone for the entire performance and so their personalities had to both shine through and be attractive to voters, in particular that of Salmond as leader.

Schechner identifies two routes to achieving 'presence' in performance, what he calls the "work route" and, somewhat sardonically, the "magic route" (2003: 232). The work route is to work progressively to achieve an office or social position of importance that confers star quality and the magic route is through some "publicity, manipulation of the public, or some hard-to-define-but-visible-quality in a person that vibrates through the public so a presence is felt" (Schechner, 2003: 232). These two routes are linked if not interdependent in the case of the SNP campaign performance.

We see the work route in the use of the role of First Minister in the election campaign. A key slogan of the campaign performance that appeared on both the SNP website and on its leaflets and posters in the Kelvin area (and indeed nationally) was 'Salmond for First Minister' and this theme was repeated in the manifesto in the section

outlining what the role of First Minister would be. The role itself was elevated to a position of importance within the campaign. Rather than a 'first among equals' approach where the entire prospective cabinet would be of equal interest and importance to the public from a communications point of view, in the SNP campaign performance the role of First Minister was singled out.

We might also consider Salmond's history as a statesman and the fact that the public have a collective memory of him and his role in the Scottish Office. In some ways, by virtue of his previous public performances, Salmond was a proven choice as a candidate for leadership as opposed to a lesser known figure such as Nicola Sturgeon. His public 'presence' in previous political performances were previews for how he would perform the role of First Minister. In this way there is an interplay between the role of First Minister and Salmond's performance of it.

As for the 'magic' route, Alex Salmond was a good choice for the leading role. Compared with other candidates (John Swinney from the SNP or even Jack McConnell from Labour) Salmond had an easy camera manner, constantly smiling expression, a lilting Scottish accent and his mimicry of certain expressive movements was smooth and polished. Analysing his straight-to-camera performance in the three party election broadcasts (PEBs) in particular, we can see thematic similarities to the Blair-Brown case – attributes such as 'genuineness' and statesmanship as well as constant smiling, nodding head, calm tone of voice and pensive pausing. Indeed, there are a number of similarities if we compare Salmond's style with that of Sir Sean Connery's straight-to-camera performance on SNPtV. As

Street notes “political representation is an art that draws on the skills and resources which define mass mediated popular culture” (2004: 446) and this is reflected in Salmond’s Connery-esque cheeky expression, slightly raised eyebrow and smile.

The other lead actor in the SNP election campaign was Nicola Sturgeon. Again, this is a reflection of the presidential style campaign. As evident in the US presidential campaign of 2008, the ‘running mate’ can be a useful way to support the leader and make up for skills that he or she does not have. So, like McCain and Palin, or indeed the ‘Glamorous Assistant’ in the circus, Sturgeon provided a youthful femaleness to Salmond’s gruff, experienced older statesman. This common combination in politics reflects heteronormative assumptions of a woman’s supportive role to the masculine leader in a First Couple of the nation. The campaign advertisement below reflects this heteronormativity. Not only are both actors touching one another but Salmond stands authoritatively and somewhat paternalistically behind a casual, smiling Sturgeon (see Figure 5.3). This tactility in their performance contrasts with Blair’s relationship to his ‘Deputy’ Brown in the handover discussed in the previous case.

Sturgeon provided a difference to Salmond in other ways. In addition to her age and gender, she was running for election in Glasgow’s constituency of Govan compared with Salmond’s northern Gordon constituency in Aberdeenshire. Sturgeon’s performance style of straightforward delivery with her more working class, urban accent provided an alternative to Salmond’s smoother, charismatic style and affluent upbringing. Again, this case

demonstrates the importance of the personal in the representation of each political actor, not just in terms of their own autobiographies but in terms of their inter-relationships.



Figure 5.3 Lead actors Alex Salmond and Nicola Sturgeon. *Photo: SNP election campaign advert*

The campaign image is also interesting because it highlights that despite the commitment to a civic conception of nationalism that is inclusive of race and background, both SNP leaders are white. This was reflected in other areas of the campaign literature as well. For example, the manifesto featured similar pictures of Salmond and Sturgeon and a separate image of a blond, white child. Also, most of the celebrity performers featured on SNPtV and at Scotland's Big Party were white. The representation of the SNP campaign performance thus featured a slight tension between the proclaimed values of the SNP and the appearance of the campaign.

Moving on, throughout the campaign there was effort to make these two the central roles in the campaign performance. This was done in part by the relative silence of other SNP actors, especially in the daily press releases on the website. Their absence or lack of presence was an active part of the performance. Similarly, pictures

of the two lead actors dominated the billing (see Figure 5.3) and the PEBs. Moreover, more functional details such as the SNP chopper used primarily by Salmond, along with the crowd of clapping supporters and the careful use of photo imagery by the SNP press office meant that the communication of the personalities of the lead actors was very controlled.

Schechner describes presence as a kind of absence where there is a sense in which stardom transcends any activity, including overt and complex characterisation (2003). He goes on to suggest, “in a certain way the star must practice doing very little, actually falling out of character in so far as it interferes with a direct communication of personality to the spectator” (Schechner, 2003: 232). This was evident in the course of the SNP election campaign in a way that makes it different from the Blair and Brown characterisation. The lead actors constantly moved from place to place and in some cases did not actually ‘do’ much other than shake hands and pose for photo opportunities (the landing in the field, for example, is one such point, or Nicola Sturgeon’s brief MC-ing stint at Scotland’s Big Party). Where, for example, Blair’s legacy speech was concerned with representing himself in quite a complex way as a flawed postmodern hero, the SNP campaign performance offered a much more shallow view of its lead actors that was more impressionistic and resonates with the idea of a celebrity ‘personality’ rather than an actual personality in a human context.

5.2.3 The sparkle of celebrity

The SNP election campaign also received an unusually (by Scottish standards) high level of endorsement from ‘real’ celebrities from popular culture, Type 2 celebrity politicians using Street’s categorisation (2004). This was, one might argue, in part due to the generous cultural policies proposed by the SNP manifesto and in part due to their nationalist agenda. Scottish actors such as Sean Connery, Robert Carlyle and Martin Compton, musicians like Sandi Thom and St Jude’s Infirmary and even comedians such as Elaine C Smith all came forward to offer their support to the SNP in the media and in the other SNP-organised events and outlets.

There were two key benefits to doing this. First, it garnered media attention, especially with the higher profile names like Sean Connery. The SNP gained visibility in the public sphere by their association with these high profile names and the popularity and persuasive thrust of these actors. Their celebrity gave the SNP circus a sense of credibility and glamour.

Secondly, it strengthened the SNP’s key theme of outward-looking civic nationalism. In some ways, the constant showcasing of Scottish celebrities was a representation of national identity in that these figures acted as representatives of the wider Scottish population. By using this technique, the SNP not only inserted itself into the public sphere by virtue of the celebrity appeal but

performatively enacted a positive image of Scotland. The message was if Sean Connery is 'one of ours' on the world stage then by association the country could stand alone too. Using a global figure like Sean Connery reinforced the SNP's desire to form an outward looking globally oriented government rather than one just defined by diaspora and population loss. The celebrities were thus representative in two ways. First they were mimetic of the Scottish population in that they self-identified as 'Scottish'. Second, they constructed a new re-presentation of Scotland as a positive standalone country whose identity was more textured than the negative association of 'not-English' on the globalised political stage.

Linked to this, the campaign performance was co-produced by the celebrities and the beneficial relationship was two-way. The celebrities added value to SNPtv and Big Party events, discussed in the next sections of this chapter, but were also provided with a national platform to self-publicise and promote new rising Scottish talent. In fact, this promotional capacity was extended with the SNP government's high profile Homecoming Scotland project in 2009 which served as a platform especially for smaller musical acts such as pop singer Amy Macdonald. The relationship between this second type of 'celebrity politician' and the first such as Salmond is complex but has proven to be long-lasting in the case of the SNP.

Whilst there were obvious benefits for this positive relationship between the stars of politics and the stars of popular culture, the counter argument would be that it actually had the potential to undermine the campaign. If, for example, the popularity of the celebrity could be transferred by association, it stood to reason that

their unpopularity could be too. This was particularly the case where the reason for the celebrity's unpopularity was policy-relevant, Sean Connery's history as regards domestic violence would have been such a case in point (Mackay, 2000).

Perhaps in reference to this possibility, the form of the celebrity performances within the campaign were controlled and scripted with only certain, rather superficial aspects of their character being highlighted. For example, most endorsements took the form of soundbites reiterating nationalist platitudes, rather than lengthy appearances discussing so-called 'hard' policy. Like the performances of Salmond and Sturgeon, the use of celebrities focused on 'presence' rather than deep characterisation or extensive development of complex policies.

However, to suggest that the role of the celebrities was linked to deliberations of hard policy in the public sphere would, I argue, be misplaced. A Holyrood poll suggested that only six percent of voters felt that the celebrity endorsement would influence their choice of party (2007). Rather than taking on a persuasive role it would seem that their key role in the performance was to gain visibility for the SNP in the public sphere. By using celebrity endorsements the SNP engaged in the traditional circus call of 'roll-up, roll-up', publicising its own show with a promise to showcase a selection of artists that would amuse and entertain in the public sphere.

5.2.4 Supporting chorus: 'Count me in'

A final group of characters to consider in the SNP campaign performance was the supporting chorus of others who were very similar to the spect-acting audience for Blair's resignation speech. In addition to the celebrities discussed above, a strong theme for the SNP campaign performance was the endorsement from a range of 'experts', mainly business leaders, whose endorsements were often linked to the live performance in some way. As with the celebrity endorsements performed using the platforms of SNP outlets like Scotland's Big Party, the travelling show itself even went to visit one of these businesses, David Cullen and his small firm Cullen Building Products (SNP, 2007a).

The campaign team thought the business endorsements sufficiently important that they updated the lists on SNPtV each day towards the end of the campaign. This culminated in the publication of the 'Top 100' business people who supported the SNP on the 23 April 2007. The people on the list, including Donald MacDonald of Macdonald hotels and Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce fame, Brian Souter owner of Stagecoach and former RBS chairman Sir George Mathewson, agreed to the statement: "Scotland can be more successful. That is why we are supporting Alex Salmond and the SNP on May 3" (SNP, 2007a).

The business endorsement was closely related to the independence agenda as a key concern in the past had been Scotland's dependence on funding derived from the UK-wide welfare system and the Barnett formula. For the idea of independence to be viable, the SNP had to show that Scotland could survive on its own. So, like the celebrities above, successful businesspeople like Mathewson and Souter enacted a positive image of Scottish identity. Perhaps more importantly, some of these businesses also provided important financial backing for the campaign – Brian Souter, a fundamentalist Christian who also funded a campaign to keep Section 28 in 2000, reportedly donated over £500,000, for example, and the Kwik-fit founder Sir Tom Farmer similarly donated £100,000 (Hutcheon, 2007; Gordon, 2007).

In addition to the support from these big business names, there were a large number of small businesses on the list. Bakers like Paul Allen from Murdoch Allen the Scottish Bakers, retailers like Alasdair Smith from International Underwear Ltd and food industries like Akash Ahmed from Moonlight Tandoori all came out both in support of the SNP potential government and, in the same breath, in support of the concept of independence. Featuring all these different types of business actors in the performance generated a narrative of inclusivity. It suggested that the SNP government was the right choice for everyone in the Big Tent of civic national identity. Including businesses like Moonlight Tandoori, The Raj Group and Ali Shan's restaurant in this Top 100 also promoted an ethnically

diverse Scotland in a way that was not reflected in the images of the official campaign literature.²³

A final group of the supporting chorus to explore is the ordinary Scottish people who were shifted from audience members to performers in the SNP election campaign. We see this in particular in the use of nameless and generic people who symbolised a particular cause, for example, 'the hospital patient' on SNPt_v or the childrens' dance group in Glasgow or the printmakers in the West of Scotland or the crowd of supporters at the Rosyth field chopper landing. Like Brown's conference speech, simple stories of individual citizens were used to symbolise key manifesto points and encourage an emotional response. By including 'ordinary people' as performers, the SNP performance appealed to different sections of the electorate by demonstrating their representativeness as well as offering the positive and holistic image of a civic nationalist Scotland.

So confident were the SNP by the end of the campaign that their final push of media events contained the slogan 'count me in', which echoed the inclusive nationalist agenda and encouraged the audience to be a part of the performance, to feel emotionally committed to it. Moreover, the nonchalant expression suggested a confidence that the SNP would win the election. Used extensively on SNPt_v and in the final PEB, this part of the SNP performance was concerned with

²³ This theme was echoed in the marketing campaign images for the SNP government's high profile Homecoming Scotland project, some of which had to be withdrawn when members of the media pointed out that they did not feature any ethnic minority citizens. (Gordon, 2009)

performatively enacting their own victory, something I return to later in this chapter.

Exploring the different performers in the campaign has highlighted that deliberative democracy is highly participatory and not isolated to the representative political elites but rather includes a range of actors in the public sphere. This reiterated the idea of devolved deliberation as an inclusive and interactive process with all types of citizen being invited into the Big Tent of civic nationalism. However, I noted that in practice 'who' is participating in addition to their presence and style is an important feature for inclusion in the deliberative process.

5.3 Showcasing curiosities; speed and incongruous plot

Modern election campaigns might be easily tagged with the circus metaphor as it aptly captures the mobility, sense of chaos and frenetic behaviour that surrounds them. However, the circus is perhaps too outmoded a metaphor in its traditional sense because it fails to address the high-tech nature of this performance. The SNP campaign featured a heavy use of mediating technologies, from those available to the general population such as email, mobile phones and websites to some more specific to the campaign such as the technologies of transport or the live newsfeed and mobile updates from the SNP website. This increase in speed and amount of political information generated an incongruous plot, less a coherent narrative with one single story and more an overlapping set of scenes or curiosities that were showcased by the performance.

Some of these mediating technologies, such as mobile phones, were available in the last election campaign in 2003, but others in particular the integration of internet and phone technologies, the ability to update blogs and websites on the move, and indeed even the chopper, were new for the 2007 campaign performance. The chief ways in which this affected the performance was in mobility and speed – communication technologies in the SNP campaign performance were faster and more mobile than they were four years earlier. From a performance perspective, this changed the nature of the interactions between performers and between audience and performer.

Revisiting the idea of the travelling show, even though the live show followed a linear trajectory and Salmond was not, physically, 'everywhere at once', in a mediatised sense he was by virtue of being constantly connected through this network of communications. So, for example, when the Labour campaign made a claim or staged an event, the SNP were able to enact a counter-performance immediately, either on their website in text or video or indeed by issuing press releases or appearing on TV/radio. These communication technologies provided Salmond with a presence that was not necessarily constrained by the physical and the live. This changed the nature of the audience exponentially as the show moved out to multiple mediatised areas.

This use of communication technologies had a profound effect on the plot of the campaign. Following the website 'newsfeed' campaign updates (itself an example of this very process of increased communications technologies) we see that every day there were at least two or three events concerning the campaign. On 30 April 2007, for example, there were six main stories (SNP, 2007a). In the morning, there was a section concerning Sturgeon's upcoming visit to the Working Rite initiative that day. Then Angus Robertson responded to a Labour announcement by saying that McConnell had performed a 'panicked u-turn' on taking part in a Sky TV debate. This was followed by details of a YouGov poll in the Daily Telegraph that put the SNP ahead of Labour. Then Sturgeon (who was, at this point, en route to the Work Rite initiative) commented on a BBC story about building aircraft carriers in Govan and Rosyth. After that the SNP was '[ridiculing]' McConnell for a report in the Courier

that suggested he was U-turning on the issue on the Tay Bridge tolls. The newsfeed suggested his U-turn was due to “SNP pressure”. Finally, there was a fuller story about Sturgeon’s visit to the Working Rite initiative with details of the speech she gave before going inside.

Taking these main stories from the SNP website newsfeed for just one day shows what a large part the variety of media outlets played in the SNP campaign performance. The Daily Telegraph, The Courier, SkyTV, the Sunday Times, the BBC and the Labour press office are all mentioned. This suggests that the SNP campaign performance was deeply reactive to counter-performances by other groups and in many ways it was co-produced by other media outlets.

The stories also show the importance of being seen to be reactive, of performing and being present. Of course time has always been an issue in politics and media. As Johnston succinctly notes in his book *No Place For Amateurs*, “campaigns that cannot keep up are campaigns that cannot win” (Johnson, 2001), where ‘keeping up’ is a process of being present, of being seen to comment, respond and counter-attack. The cast and crew of the SNP performance were not only constantly updated by their communications technologies about possibly relevant stories, they were able to integrate their reactions into their performance.

Examining the SNPs’ newsfeed for a day gives a sense of the mobility of the campaign and the key areas that were being targeted; Sturgeon’s journey to Govan, the stories on the Tay Bridge and the Clyde, and the particularly Govan-relevant issue of building aircraft carriers. Also, it is striking how short the entries were – not quite

soundbites in the traditional sense but small clips of text that were between 100 and 250 words long. The scenes in the SNP campaign performance, then, were written as brief but plentiful.

Considering that this was just one day shows how complex and fast moving the overall plot of the SNP campaign performance actually was. Looking at the whole campaign using this lens of the SNP website newsfeeds, the impression is given of a plot that seems incongruous and a little absurd. It moved in several different directions with many events bring strung together at speed with nothing to make sense of them but the narrative of the mega-performance of the campaign itself and the overarching concept of campaign time passing. Within any given day of the campaign, the stories could range from council tax to independence, cultural policy to Labour candidate's TV performances. The website itself showed these two elements in direct comparison with the daily, or indeed, hourly, changes in the newsfeed juxtaposed with the constant image of an 'election clock' counting down to Election Day. This again demonstrates the links to ludic performance, with the tension between the paidia of the many different events strung together and the ludus of the relentlessly pro-SNP narrative.

Perhaps this is a feature of any election performance because in a high level election everything is questioned. Going back to the idea of liminality, the election campaign is a time to question everything because of the potential power of the performance to enact change. It is by nature quite incongruous. The circus theme becomes useful again here in the idea of exhibiting or 'showcasing' curiosities where a selection of scenes or events are presented in quick succession, each

designed to provoke a reaction out of the audience. For the circus that reaction is awe, entertainment and amusement whereas for the campaign it is voting, political outrage and side-taking (as well as perhaps some entertainment). There was a totality to this performance, a desire to answer all ills and this perhaps led to the abundance of political information that it exhibited. Communication technologies gave the SNP performance that opportunity to add more and more to their repertoire of showcases, no matter how trivial or small because of the many ways the campaign performance could be remediated.

Moreover, the array of communication technologies available changed the way that the plot of the campaign could be experienced by the audience. The speed of technologies meant that information was circulated to such an extent that it was difficult to follow a linear plot pattern or indeed to follow all aspects of the performance. This abundance of information that was levelled at the audience qualitatively changed the experience of the performance. Citizens were forced to choose which aspects of the campaign they could follow as well as what form they would like their experience - live, mediated, historical or immediate. Moreover, these different forms offered choices as to how they could deliberate and re-act to the performance.²⁴

²⁴ This line of thought is echoed in postmodern cultural theory, particularly in the work of Paul Virilio (Virilio and Polizzotti, 2006).

5.3.1 Manifestos and sound bites: scripts

Leading on from this idea of incongruity and speed, the scripts for the SNP performance were constantly re-written and reactive throughout the duration of the performance and as a result the plot was incongruous, fast-moving and complex. However, something that remained constant and that imposed a sort of unity on the plot was the manifesto, which acted as a backdrop or a master script for the entire SNP campaign.

The SNP manifesto was centred on “ambitions” for Scotland and assertions of how things “will be”. The mainly textual document covered an impressive range of issues including agriculture, justice, education and the SNP’s “vision for Scotland”, always using the phrases “The SNP government will” or “we will”. It also included examples of past events that supported the future policies, for example ‘The SNP supported the introduction of the Hungry for success’ policy’ (SNP, 2007b: 40) or ‘We will continue to work for withdrawal from the Common Fisheries Policy’ (SNP, 2007b: 73).

In stark contrast to the experience of reading the newsfeeds on the websites or gathering the newspapers from the campaign period, where the stories appeared in an unstructured manner, this script was coherent with a particular narrative and ideology. Opening with a clear introduction in first person by Alex Salmond, followed by a summary ‘and highlights’ and then systematically outlining policies under prescribed headings, this script created a narrative of

a future SNP-led Scotland that would be “healthier, wealthier, safer, fairer, easier, greener, smarter” and ‘more successful’ (SNP, 2007b).

As such the manifesto was a master-script for the sound bites that were performed during the campaign. So, Elaine C Smith’s endorsement on SNPtV included references to Trident, the Iraq war and independence (SNP, 2007c: 26 April) that could be traced to the vow in the manifesto to ‘bring Scottish troops home from Iraq’, ‘remove nuclear weapons from Scotland’s shores’ and present the choice of independence to the electorate because it is ‘the fair and democratic way’ (SNP, 2007b: 7). Actor Robert Carlyle’s endorsement on Radio 4, remediated on SNPtV (SNP, 2007a), criticised the lack of government support for the British film industry while Sturgeon’s response thanking him referred directly to the ‘Irish-style tax incentives’ proposed in the manifesto that aims to support “culture and creativity” (SNP, 2007b: 44). This was reinforced by the highly publicized music event Scotland’s Big Party, featuring endorsements by musicians such as Mogwai and St Jude’s infirmary which echoed the manifesto claim of a “culturally cosmopolitan Scotland”...with “talent in abundance” (SNP, 2007b: 55). These examples illustrate how there was a rich tapestry of connections between manifesto script, sound bite scripts and actions.

Moreover, similar to Brown’s conference speech, the manifesto was the script for a future performance, imagined at that time, when the SNP had won the election and took office. The SNP campaign performance, in this context then, was a way of bridging the gap between the past performances of the SNP (especially of failed election campaigns) and the imagined future - and it was constantly

haunted by both. The campaign performance was a process of 'becoming' – of transforming the party and the actors into a new identity of 'winners' rather than the old one of losers, but also of transforming the SNP out of opposition into a ruling party.

The language of 'we will' suggested an immediacy to this that was more effective than a more tentative 'we would' or 'we could'. In using these confident phrases the SNP attempted to re-create and re-define the political reality by creating a performance world, an 'as if' about the future that could be made real if the spect-actors took action. In this way, the performance attempted to transform not only the preferences of voters but the nation itself. It was a rehearsal for the future performance of being in power and shows that the representative relationship between electorate and politician concerns not only the present but also the management of past, present and future performances.

5.4 Digital Deliberation: SNPtv, deliberation and winning

Having described the sheer amount of information that was encompassed in the campaign, and argued that the performance itself was incongruous and lacking in focus, I shall now turn to a technique that the SNP used to deal with that. In addition to the website newsfeed that streamed information as it happened, the SNP created a whole new medium to distribute campaign information called SNPtv.

SNPtv -an online TV station streamed from the SNP.org website - was launched on 23 April 2007 to 'mark 10 days until polling', making it the first of its kind in UK party politics. This was not the first time that the SNP had developed alternative media outlets, having not enjoyed a particularly positive relationship with the press in the past, especially not the 'red top' newspapers like the Scottish Sun or Daily Record. For example, in the latter part of the 1999 election campaign the SNP stopped giving press conferences altogether and launched their own newspaper 'Scotland's Voice' in an attempt to combat the negative press coverage they had were receiving at the time (Lynch, 2002). More recently, before the election campaign they expanded and updated their main website in an attempt to improve their fundraising capabilities and ongoing campaigning, becoming the first UK political party to broadcast podcasts to web-users.

It is, however, important to note that in the 2007 election campaign the SNP received fairly positive coverage from the print

media so the role of SNPtv became one designed to complement rather than replace their other media activities. In particular, it chimed well with the other extensive online facilities that the SNP website offered, from podcasts, to downloadable phone ringtones and 'e-tools' for campaigners.

SNPtv could be accessed from the SNP homepage through an eye-level button with the commanding invitation 'Watch SNPtv'. Clicking on this opened a new viewer (see Figure 5.4) and started broadcasting the channel from an inset flash player on the right whilst on the left there were 4 tabs ('Schedule', 'Programmes', 'Submit Your Clips' and 'Search') which could be explored in a frame whilst watching the video. Below the video screen, there was a continuous line of mobile text that contained news bulletins. The screen backdrop was a sketch of a Saltire flag and an election-countdown digital timer.

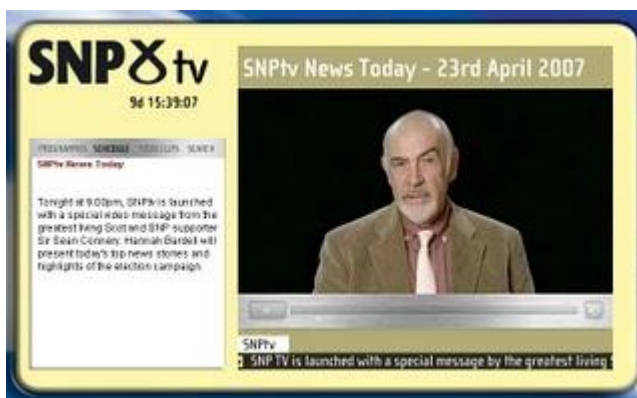


Figure 5.4 Sean Connery on SNPtv. Image: SNP website

The majority of programming followed a typical infotainment news broadcasting format. In programmes called *SNPtv News Today*, the

presenter (a young, white, Scottish woman from GMTV called Hannah Bardell) delivered the daily bulletins and introduced 'special reports' from their chief reporter Angus Roberston, who was in fact the SNP Campaign Director. The shows lasted approximately twenty minutes and were aired daily at 9pm. However the viewer could view shows 'On Demand' from past or present.

From this brief description, it is clear that the setup was strikingly similar to two popular cultural reference points - the 24hr news channels such as BBC News24 and the video playback website YouTube. Despite the ambitious name, SNPtV took different things from each - whilst the overall image and content was similar to the televised news channels, the footage was by no means continuous and the video playback format was nearly identical to YouTube.

In addition to the ticking clock and the launch featuring Sir Sean Connery, the SNPtV performance was punctuated by four key plot events: the three Party Election Broadcasts and Scotland's Big Party. *SNPtV News Today* gave each event-style coverage, with 'sneak previews' and related interviews being broadcast on the programme beforehand to manufacture a sense of excitement and suspense. It also had an ongoing 'Opinion Polls' storyline. Most episodes of *SNPtV News Today* started with a review of the opinion polls in the daily print media. The camera would slowly zoom in to copies of the multiple dailies whose polls suggested an SNP victory and then zoomed in again to the actual page and opinion poll chart itself. The intention was obvious - to represent the real and 'objective' evidence of the SNP's continued support in the electorate.

The SNP used opinion polls not as an indicator of how the campaign was progressing but as an election strategy. Put another way, the opinion polls were not simply a reflection of preferences in the public sphere but a device to transform those preferences. In this the SNP relied on the audience being swayed not just by their own beliefs but by what Przeworski calls “equilibrium beliefs” - beliefs about other people’s beliefs - as the party tried to extend the pro-SNP narrative out-with the bounds of its performance and affect the reality outside the channel (Elster, 1998; Przeworski, 1998).

Despite the various plot twists that kept the action continuously ‘unfolding’ in a coherent manner, there was a problem with the SNPtv narrative that permeated all of its programming. When watching conflict in a performance the spect-actors are engaged by their own capacity to consider the desirable outcome and to ‘take sides’. Perhaps the most common performance device for creating this sense of conflict is to pitch the main, heroic character(s) against some trial, be it an evil villain, a natural disaster or social unrest. The campaigning season was peppered with potential ‘villains’, especially from the Scottish Labour Party. However, the SNP tried to run a positive campaign to counterbalance Labour’s negative campaign against them, thus gaining the moral upper hand. This left SNPtv with a severely restricted potential to express any conflict. The script did not present the audience with an opportunity to take sides because on SNPtv only one side was presented. Take, for example, the Opinion Poll narrative mentioned above. It progressed temporally however it was a narrative where the hero, the SNP, always won. Whilst one might argue that there was implied conflict

in the competition of polls, the plot was less engaging than it would have been if, for example, it had included the polls/papers where the SNP was struggling.

By only presenting the best possible narrative for the SNP the programme highlighted its lack of objectivity that the audience might expect to accompany the format of 24hour news. In doing so, it crossed the boundary between performance and propaganda - with propaganda the audience is acutely aware that it is being forced to take one side, rather than autonomously choosing one. Rather than an engaging narrative centred around conflict and choice for the spect-actors, SNPtV was more like an advertisement.

SNPtV was thus a performance within a performance that represented the SNP campaign as always winning. Going back to the idea of showcasing, SNPtV was an endlessly self-referential showcase of the election campaign itself. We might widen this out to the general plot of the SNP campaign that we discussed above. In every action, the actors offered a pro-SNP view of the performance. This was a one-sided story and to consider the other side of it the audience had to watch the other performances.

Another problem with SNPtV was its quality. Whilst SNPtV mimicked the format of a news programme it failed to do so convincingly. In fact, in their attempt to portray a canonical form by mimicking the trusted broadcasting news format, SNPtV slid into irony. Throughout the broadcasting period there were a number of production problems rarely seen on the professional news channels. Programmes did not start on time (including the much publicised

inaugural show), Hannah Bardell appeared nervous, her interviewing was stilted and punctuated with note-shuffling silences, and the sound was either interrupted or, amusingly for a time, distorted giving Bardell a robotic voice. These and other mistakes made the broadcasts look like unprofessional parodies of the 'real' news and consistently reminded the audience of this channel's dissimilarity to their trusted news programmes. Even the name 'SNPtv' was somewhat ambitious considering the 20 minutes of air time. As a result SNPtv was ridiculed variously by the press and the Labour and Lib Dem offices as a disaster and a gimmicky PR exercise.

The failures of SNPtv highlight the fact that it was a representation, a performance which, like Obama's oath-taking at his presidential inauguration, showed up the process of performance as it failed. However, it also highlights a reflexivity in the audience's response to the staging of politics. There seems to be a conflict between the audience/electorate expecting a high quality performance from their politicians and the discourse of honesty and authenticity. In postmodern politics, it would seem that nothing is authentic, rather there are performances that appear more authentic than others.

However, the confessional style and the attempt to communicate directly with voters offered an interesting perspective. SNPtv gave the audience a unified, albeit biased, narrative of the campaign which was accessible and amusing as well as dealing with serious political issues. Rather than viewing it as an example of politics being trivialised, SNPtv was an attempt to represent politics in a

format that the citizen audience would enjoy and be engaged in as spect-actors. It also fostered a more direct relationship with the audience than would have been possible through a more traditional independent media outlet. In this way it was more deliberative in its desire to reach out to the citizens and develop a direct discussion with them on their terms rather than those of elite politicians. Moreover, the digital nature of this deliberation allowed the audience the opportunity to interact with the performance and perform a more active role than just that of voting. The ability to submit and download clips, comment on the associated blogs and receive mobile updates allowed for real time feedback on the campaign, even if this feature was not used in an extensive way.

5.4.1 Winning

Whilst the political gaffe of SNPtv might be an example of where the SNP lost a battle in the wider context of the election campaign, the SNP won the war by winning the election itself. The SNP had maintained a lead in the polls throughout the campaign. This was interesting in itself because, as Angus Robertson said on the night before the election “we are delighted that for the first time ever the SNP have gone into election day ahead in the polls” before repeating the campaign slogan for the last time, “it’s time for a more successful Scotland. It’s time for the SNP” (SNP, 2007a: 2 May).

However, the election night, whilst being the most predictable part of the performance for having a structural ‘ending’, did not go

as smoothly as planned. The ensuing rejected ballots controversy and the complexities of the electoral system in the Scottish parliament meant that the formation of government was not confirmed until well into the following day.²⁵ In fact, Salmond tentatively and pre-emptively declared victory by taking his Salmond Chopper to the historic location of Prestonfield House and delivering a “brief presidential speech” (Macwhirter, 2007; Dinwoodie, 2007).

This performance contrasted sharply with the campaign performance. Compared with the travelling show of the campaign where Salmond had travelled to informal spaces like a local field or town hall and interacted with the citizen audience on a personal level, this performance was more similar to the performances seen in the Blair/Brown case. Salmond’s demeanour was authoritative and serious as he pledged a judicial enquiry into the ballots issue before going inside to the inaccessible Prestonfield House. The location was symbolically resonant as Prestonfield House, now an opulent hotel, is steeped in nationalist history being at “the centre of Scotland’s social, political, business and artistic life” since the 17th century (see Prestonfield House Website). Like Westminster in the Blair/Brown case, this location added an authority to his performance. But it also connected the party with its broader campaign theme of a celebration of civic, culturally and economically confident Scotland.

Moreover, because he had not technically won the election at that time, by visibly landing his Salmond Chopper on the lawn,

²⁵ See (TheElectoralCommission, 2007b)

Salmond's Prestonfield House performance symbolically resonated the idea of a coup or an occupation, albeit in a very restrained way. This was a decisive, performative act that denoted his new authority as First Minister-in-waiting and challenged the other political actors (notably the incumbent Jack McConnell) to disagree with such a confident symbolic gesture. Rather than waiting for the others to declare a loss, Salmond instead performed victory.²⁶

Salmond's transformation of the historic location of Prestonfield House with his Salmond Chopper was part of the process of becoming First Minister and an attempt to script the new political reality as an SNP-government reality. After the campaign performance was over, Salmond thus reverted to a more elitist performance style in order to impose his authority as national leader. In this dramatic climax to the SNP campaign performance, from the ballots being discounted to the scrambled coalition, there was a point at which the performance tipped from liminal into liminoid. The overarching authoritative structures of power began to come under question and the legitimacy of the election was under threat. Therefore, the acceptance performance had to be more convincing and more authoritative to recover a sense of stability. This case highlights the fact that whilst deliberations in the public sphere are a part of the structure of power within the democracy, the election and the aggregation of votes provides a more definitive mandate for action that conceives of the representative relationship as one of

²⁶ It is interesting to compare this with the recent 2010 British general election results which similarly took a few days for a stable coalition to form and where the key actors competed to authoritatively perform the role of new Prime Minister, especially between Brown and Cameron at the beginning.

delegation of power rather than interactive and deliberative on everyday decisions.

This was reinforced by Salmond's strong acceptance speech as he took office as First Minister in Parliament and swore the oath that he had been promising during the SNP campaign performance. He referred to the election night and the concerns over Scotland being a "divided nation" but then embarked on a conciliatory civic nationalist speech about coalition with all parts of "the community of Scotland [being] woven into the tartan of Parliament" (Salmond, 2007). Again this shows the importance of performance in order to reinforce authority: "today I commit myself to leadership wholly and exclusively in the Scottish national interest...That is the parliament the people of Scotland have elected" (Salmond, 2007). His performance confirmed that he had won the election and, by saying those words, he officially became the leader. However, Salmond's speech, by focusing on the "parliament the people of Scotland have elected", in some ways reinforced his commitment to a deliberative form of government, something that was developed by the SNP government's subsequent 'National Conversation'. His elite style of performance was thus a transitional phase in asserting his ability to govern which then allowed the SNP to enact the more deliberative National Conversation at a later date.

5.5 Conclusion: Performing Elections; circus, presence and deliberation

Exploring the SNP election campaign using the metaphor of politics-as-performance has shown that, like the Blair/Brown case, this case featured conventional political actors who staged a national event in an effort to make visible the practice of political representation and generate public personas for the key actors. However, where Blair and Brown's position as representatives had already been solidified by an electoral mandate both at the constituency level (by being MPs) and at the national level (by the constant of the Labour Party being in government), the SNP performance was concerned with demonstrating the political actors' potential to perform this representative role. As such, the SNP campaign performance of representation was in the subjunctive mood and this made the performance metaphor resonate even more clearly.

This potential, liminal nature of their representative relationship to the citizen audience meant that the SNP performance of that role was especially important. Where for Blair and Brown performing the rituals of the transfer of power made their transformations more 'real', so too the SNP political actors performing the ritual of the election campaign was a part of the process of becoming a representative government. However, because of the sense of uncertainty as to what the election result would be, the performances could not be as authoritative or transformative as they were in the case of the handover from Blair to Brown.

This uncertainty was reflected in the control that the performers had over the staging of the performance. Throughout the exploration of this case I noted that the SNP performance was like a circus with the twin elements of playful, chaotic *paidia* and the overarching structure of *ludus*. This was particularly resonant as I described the incongruous plot that did not follow a traditional narrative but presented a montage of scenes that were often reactive to counter-performances from other actors in the political sphere. In this way, the SNP performers were not able to script the performance definitively but had to engage in the political game of generating competing representations with other political actors. Thus, this case highlighted the role of performance and playfulness in conventional politics that to some extent sets it apart from everyday life. As I move on to explore the cases of unconventional political action by the Faslane protestors and the London bombers I will argue that this sense of playfulness becomes more subversive as the political actors' performances are less authoritative.

Another difficulty in the staging of the performance of the SNP was the ability to gain visibility in the public sphere. In some ways, Blair and Brown's consolidated position as representatives provided them with a ready-made stage for their performances. The SNP performance on the other hand had to target their audience aggressively using techniques that included billing the performance, bringing the performance to the audience through the travelling show and featuring a supporting cast, many of whom already had an established presence in Scotland's public sphere. This, I argued, presents an example where conventional political representation

does not take place in a vacuum but in a crowded public arena. As a result, it becomes relational to other cultural and economic actors who themselves can take on a politically representative role. As I shall argue in the following chapters, the need to gain visibility in the public sphere is shared by the unconventional performers who find this more difficult to accomplish without the conferred importance of conventional representative office. As a result, the performance techniques they employ to achieve their political goals become more transformational and extreme.

Finally, the SNP performance demonstrated a more interactive, deliberative relationship with potential audiences than the Blair/Brown case, as exemplified by the generation of interactive platforms like SNPtV and Scotland's Big Party, and also by the party's travelling show that took its campaign to live audiences around the country. Like the Blair/Brown case, the performance metaphor highlighted the importance for the political actor to be seen to be present at particular locations in order to reinforce their representative role. The travelling show reflected the SNP's commitment to devolved deliberation as a core component of a new self-confident Scotland. These possibilities for audience interaction were symbolically resonant of a more equal and close relationship between the conventional political actor and the citizens they intended to represent, on both a spatial and metaphorical level.

This interactive relationship cast the SNP as authoritative representatives of the Scottish nation (where their presence provided a mirror to the nation), and also allowed the SNP performers to construct a positive civic national identity. This resonated on a

national level where the SNP highlighted particular locations and areas of internal strength but also in an outward-looking globalised way with the inclusion of global celebrities like Sean Connery or the RBS chairman Sir George Mathewson thus making a stronger case for Scottish self-determination.

Despite the egalitarian Big Top deliberations of inclusive civic nationalism that resonated throughout the campaign, Salmond's Prestonfield performance to claim electoral victory showed a return to the form of conventional top-down politics. This performance style echoed the Blair/Brown case where the audience was spoken to from the platform of political power rather than interacted with on equal terms. This elite form of representation was a temporary shift that was necessary to assert power, something that was made clear in Salmond's oath of office speech in Parliament. This assertion of representative authority, made with full reference to the power of the Scottish people, was necessary to ensure confident governance at a time when UK-wide media were focused on Edinburgh and the implications of the SNP victory. It also enabled the subsequent SNP government to develop their theme of deliberation by focusing on public consultation in policy-making and enacting The National Conversation.

In the last two cases I have explored political representation and its relationship to deliberation by conventional political actors. In considering the way that they connect with their audiences I noted that they differ in their commitment to deliberation with the citizen and often offer limited options for audience participation. In the next part of this thesis I go on to explore two unconventional political

performances from citizens who represent themselves in the public sphere and deliberate on their own terms. I argue that they are set up in opposition to the conventional approach with performances designed to subvert it and highlight the fundamental importance of an equal, grassroots-led political deliberation. More interestingly, the extent to which the unconventional performers claim or indeed desire to be seen as 'representative' or democratic becomes more unstable as does the re-action that they demand from their audiences.

Chapter 6:

Performing Protest: Mediatisation, Embodiment and the Visible in the case of Faslane 365

Whilst conventional forms of political deliberation that take place in the institutionalised environments of Parliament or the party conference hall are perhaps the more commonly-cited examples of staged political performance, it is important to consider the analytical strength of the politics-as-performance metaphor in less conventional political events. There are meaningful differences in the organisation, scale, authority and goals of unconventional political actors but the metaphor allows us a platform to compare them in light of the techniques the actors employ to insert themselves into the public sphere.

One of the strengths of a deliberative rather than an aggregative conception of democracy is that it takes account of the other voices in the public sphere that persuade citizens to change their preferences outside of those seeking an electoral mandate and a seat in Parliament. The SNP case highlighted this to some extent with the use of cultural and business actors in their attempts to persuade voters. In this widened base for inclusion in deliberative democracy, then, these unconventional political actors are nonetheless similarly performing a representative role for the citizen, albeit outside the confines of the formal mechanisms of government.

In some ways, as both Stephen Coleman and John Street have

implied, unconventional actors can paradoxically appear more representative than the elite conventional political representatives whose rational deliberations in Parliament are alienated from the ordinary citizen (Coleman, 2003; Street, 2004). The metaphor of politics-as-performance, by encouraging us to compare conventional and unconventional political actors also generates a less elitist perspective of what counts as political representation and highlights the more interactive relationship these actors have with the electorate. Moreover, it allows us to consider the limits of deliberation, to explore the often fuzzy boundaries between persuasion, bargaining and threats (Elster, 1998).

This chapter is dedicated to the protest: the first of two types of non-conventional political events considered in this thesis. Performing protest, as a spectacular event and as a form of political participation for performers, is situated very much in the deliberative rather than aggregative democratic sphere. Unlike the individual, secretive activity of voting, protest is concerned with visibly representing an oppositional identity in the public sphere. In this way, the political protest differs significantly from the conventional political examples discussed in the preceding chapters. The politician-as-performer is situated within the constant cycle of campaigning and re-election so as a publicly recognised representative his or her actions are explicitly linked to and legitimised by the voting process. For the protestors, on the other hand, the protest is the process of “going public”, in moving from individual dissent or grievance to attempting to transform the preferences of other citizens directly by visibly representing their

own dissent in the public sphere (Fox and Starn, 1997: 6). As I argue over the course of this chapter, this can be limiting in terms of how their performance is constructed, but also frees the protestors from some of the conventions and rules that constrain conventional political actors.

This starting point of resistance and dissent, and their relative lack of power and resources, means that the techniques that protestors use to achieve this goal are often more emotionally-motivated, involve more embodied action and are more contested than those used by conventional political actors. Furthermore, the intended outcomes of the performance can be more subversive as they are not necessarily generated to achieve a particular voting outcome by persuasion but can extend to making demands for immediate change or revolution. As such, looking at protest-as-performance provides a useful median between the traditional discursive deliberations of the conference speech that to a greater extent comply with a classic procedural deliberative model and the extreme bargaining of the terrorist event that bypasses it altogether.

6.01 Case-study: Faslane 365

The chosen case study centres on two performances from the Faslane 365 movement at Faslane nuclear base (home of the UK's Polaris Missile system) on the west coast of Scotland. Faslane 365 was an umbrella organisation that orchestrated a year-long continuous blockade of the nuclear base between 1 October 2006 and 1 October

2007. Its twin goals were to “bring people to witness and impede the nuclear base where Britain's nuclear weapons are deployed, and enable them to demonstrate the range of serious concerns” (Faslane 365 website). The movement was structured so that different civil society groups took responsibility for 24-hour or 48-hour shifts to maintain a continuous presence at the base throughout the year. As such, it was a highly participatory, transnational event that, although based in Scotland, involved performers from all over the UK (and indeed some international groups) travelling to the performance location to take part.

An important differentiating feature of this case is that most of the fieldwork was centred around my direct experience of the live performances, as well as the performer-generated mediated performances online. The reasons for this highlight the different possibilities for audience participation in events organised by unconventional political actors. Unlike the Blair/Brown and SNP cases where many of the live performances were enacted in inaccessible spaces, the Faslane performance was publicly accessible to any audience.

The first performance I attended was the Stop the War Coalition blockade on 7 November 2006. At that time, the Stop the War Coalition maintained a fairly high and coherent profile in the public sphere and appeared to enjoy high levels of public support. In nearby Glasgow, for example, in February 2003 an estimated 61,000 people marched in their anti-war protest (Jeffery, 2003). More pertinent to the research, at the Stop the War Coalition annual meeting in Manchester in September 2006, an estimated 20, 000

people took to the streets to oppose the Labour conference running at the same time (BBCNews, 2006a). As such, the Stop the War Coalition blockade was an interesting case to research as the group was bringing its already established identity in the public sphere and demonstrable support base to the relatively new movement of Faslane 365. Taking its recent protest activities as precedent, I expected that there would be a good turnout with protestors engaging in direct action at the base.

The Stop the War Coalition blockade was also chosen as a case study because, given their experience in organizing and executing larger-scale protests, it seemed likely that the performers would be able to satisfy the demands of the script for the Faslane 365 performance. As Faslane 365 was organized primarily online through the extensive website, the main script was a downloadable booklet called the 'Faslane 365 Resource Pack' (Faslane365, 2006b). It contained an outline of the structure, aims and process of Faslane 365 including a history of protest at Faslane, the organization of the year and some justification of their anti-Trident position. It also acted as a guide to peaceful protest, including advice on everything from making lock-on tubes, to using guerilla theatre, to what to do if you got arrested. Also, interestingly, it included narratives from previous Faslane blockaders detailing their experience of the area and the practicalities of protesting. As such, this script provided a detailed template for the Faslane 365 protestors to create their own performances and develop their characters, whilst at the same time setting up expectations of how the performance would be.

In performance, however, "the text where it exists is understood

as a key to action not its replacement” (Schechner, 2003: 19) and so the move from script to actual event is not necessarily smooth. This was reflected in the case of the Stop the War Coalition protest in that none of the activities outlined in the booklet were carried out. The performance on 7 November 2006 suffered from extremely low-turnout (three performers), bad weather and a lack of action. In fact, the availability of the text both before and after the performance made the failure of the live event more apparent as it so obviously had not lived up to the expectations set up in the script. Unlike the script in the Blair-Brown case which was scrupulously and rigidly adhered to, this case had more in common with the SNP performance where the script was constantly rewritten throughout the duration of the action and relative to the counter-performances of other actors.

This early, unsuccessful performance contrasted acutely with the second performance from Faslane 365 that I attended – the ‘curtain call’ of the movement called ‘The Big Blockade’ on the 1 October 2007. With the full year of blockading, Faslane 365 had established itself as a coherent movement in its own right and the curtain call was a self-congratulatory and celebratory event where all the main performing groups were invited back to the stage for one last scene. In this way it was both a continuation of the previous blockade performances throughout the year but also a distinct event. This was indicated by the new script that was produced (the ‘Big Blockade Briefing Pack’) that reiterated many of the issues in the original resource booklet but also included a retrospective look at the success of the yearlong movement (Faslane365, 2006a). This script was

followed fairly closely and the Big Blockade was very successful with a turnout of over 500 protestors, over 70 arrests and a flurry of activity from police and protestors.

By looking closely at these two very different performances from the beginning and end of a year-long movement, I am able to consider how the performance techniques used by the performers, in conjunction with contextual issues such as timing and weather, contributed to the successful or unsuccessful insertion of the protests into the public sphere. I am also able to set these two performances within the overall narrative of the meta-performance that was Faslane 365. A key feature of this narrative was the involvement of other actors in the performance that challenged Faslane 365's staging of the event. Groups as diverse as the police, the workers at the nuclear base and Peninsula 24/7 (a reactive protest group comprising local residents who organised in protest against Faslane 365) all became actors in the wider Faslane 365 performance. This performance thus generated a highly participatory and deliberative context offering opportunities for a range of actors to represent their dissent in the public sphere.

However, this case also highlighted that Faslane 365 as an organisation of unconventional political actors had less control over staging and the way its performance would be received by the audience. These alternative actors offered conflicting counter-narratives of the performance, which undermined the success story that was portrayed in the Faslane 365 website. As such this case demonstrated how the Faslane protestors relied heavily on their mediatised performance as a way to shape understandings of the live

performance. As I describe the case in further detail I argue that applying the metaphorical frame of performance to the process of the protestors 'going public' problematises, in particular, the issues of (dis)location, embodiment and being visible in the representation of political actors in the public sphere. In this regard it highlights the complexity of deliberative democracy and the multiple sites available for deliberation in both live and mediatised settings.

6.1. Performance Space: the diorama effect at Faslane

Performances have an ability to generate alternative worlds in the subjunctive mood, to create another imaginary world with its own rules of space, narrative and time separate from everyday life. In this way, rather like the glass-domed miniature scenes in a diorama, performances might be thought of as worlds within a world. This diorama effect was particularly resonant in the Faslane experience not least because of the spatial isolation of the performance.

This sense of isolation started with the fact that Faslane nuclear base is fairly peripheral to large urban centres and is best accessed by car. As you drive towards it, the base is situated on the left hand side of a straight road (with a 60 mile per hour speed limit) that links the main seaside towns of Helensburgh and Garelochhead (Figure 6.1). The infrastructure of the road makes the main performance space at the North Gate difficult to access outside the vehicle, with the only option being either to park in one of the towns and brave the long, unpleasant walk to the North Gate or to park in the nearby cemetery car park.

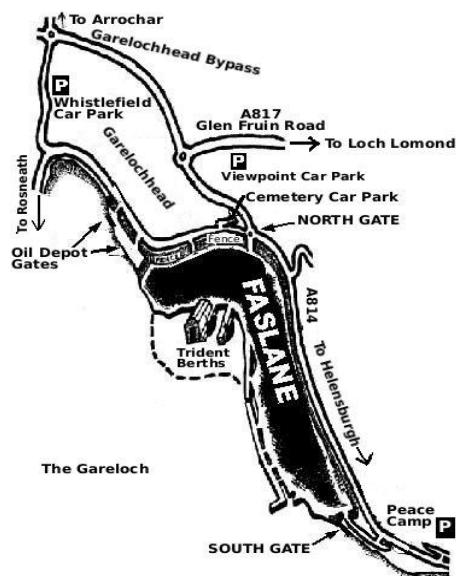


Figure 6.1 Protestor-generated map of Faslane area (not to scale). Image: *Faslane365*

Website

The road infrastructure meant that there was a coherence to the performance space that made the Faslane performance different to more central protest locations. For example, comparing Faslane to the regular Stop the War Coalition marches in urban hubs such as Glasgow and Manchester, the backdrop of the changing cityscape provided a distraction not least because there were other events being staged concurrently and competing for attention in the public sphere. At Faslane's North Gate, on the other hand, the unchanging backdrop of the nuclear base acted as the metaphorical proscenium arch that remained static and constant, and there were few complicating factors except for the passing traffic on the road. The effect was similar to that achieved by a darkened theatre where audience and performers are placed closely together with few distractions to the performance. In this way, the Faslane location made this performance essentialist in style, much like the simplistic, static backdrop in a diorama.

This infrastructure, whilst giving the performance space a coherence and simplicity, also generated issues of access that were relevant for both audience and performers. Like a diorama, individuals were either part of this world or not, and the two different performances at Faslane that I observed highlighted this issue coming from both directions. Not only was there a problem accessing the performance in the first place, but once there it could be difficult to leave (due to the blockading and the police presence). As either a performer or audience member, you could find yourself stuck in traffic on the long road that acted as the only real artery in and out of the diorama dome and thereby isolated from the performance space. This essentialism of being one or the other generated a constant and focused audience but meant that the audience could not necessarily leave if they chose to do so.

6.1.1 'This is a performance'; competing transformations of space

The discussion above highlights an issue about the boundaries of the metaphorical diorama, raising the question: where did the performance world begin? An interesting feature of this case was that there was intense competition between different groups for control and authorship of the performance space. On reflection, this is a common feature of protests in general. Going back to the example of the Stop the War Coalition urban marches, there was a negotiation between police and protestors as to which spaces could be used for their performance. Moreover, with many protest

performances there is often the underlying threat that this pact will be broken. This was not the case in the conventional types of political performance such as the ritual of the Blair-Brown case or even Salmond's chopper in the Rosyth field where the authority over how to use the space was much less controversial.

The performance space for the Faslane protest was limited and heavily regulated not least because it was also the main gate to a nuclear base and as such it was not 'designed' to be easily accessible to citizens. The North Gate, which consisted of an entrance to the base, flanked by high walls, with a circular area around a roundabout, was the main space for the protestors to use as performance space (Figure 6.2). Occupying this space involved standing in the road and thus blockading both the entrance to the base and the main route to the town of Garelochhead. This was a key catalyst to the intense competition between the police, the protestors, and local passers-by over the articulation of the performance space. Linked to this, there was simply not that much space to share, which gave the performance a sense of claustrophobia but also a sense of unity.



Figure 6.2 North Gate at Faslane. *Photo: Author*

Thinking about the boundaries of the performance, we might explore the “acts of designation set up as binary pairs between the performance world and the non-performance world” (Hilton, 1987: 14-15). These are culturally-specific acts that signify that ‘this is a performance’ and enable the transformative process of becoming to begin (Schechner, 2002). At Faslane the performers not only attempted to designate areas where the performance world started and ended. They also attempted to transform the space into ‘full fields of communication’ that communicated on emotional, sensory and symbolic levels and thereby adding to the narrative of the performance (Schechner, 2003; Schechner, 2002).

Before exploring these transformations, it is important to note that as a performance location the area in front of Faslane’s North Gate was symbolically relevant to this performance. Faslane nuclear base has a heritage of protest against it, with the semi-permanent Faslane Peace Camp situated across the road since the 1980s. The horizontal split made by the road mimicked the ideological divide

between the key actors. This was reflected in the set design, with the peace camp being ungated, colourful and anarchic in contrast to the grey and foreboding exterior of the base. The area in front of the North Gate was thus stuck literally and metaphorically between two clearly defined places which were competing for the attention of the audience. As such, there was a real need to carve out an independent performance space to give the Faslane 365 performance an independent identity.

In some ways the presence of the actors was an act of designation of the performance world because it was different from the normal, everyday representation of this area. In the Stop the War Coalition blockade, for example, it was the visibly large numbers of police (with their props of cars and dogs) who were the key sign that there was a performance happening at all. In contrast, the Big Blockade completely filled the small performance space and the surrounding roads with protestors enacting the Carnival of Resistance. The high, authoritarian walls topped with barbed wire were a symbolically resonant backdrop to the anarchic flurry of colourful actions that the performers embodied and it was a relationship of interaction between the location and the performers' actions that generated the meaning of the transformation.

The Faslane performers also generated their own set designs using this location as a backdrop. Like the actions of the performers, there was also controversy over these transformations. For example, the performers created and hung colourful protest signs on the nuclear base and the roundabout (Figure 6.3). However, this was not entirely legal and at certain points throughout the year the banners

would be taken down by the police. A second, more interesting example can be found in the protest graffiti in the nearby town of Garelochhead, which was the cause of complaints by local residents (Figure 6.4)



Figure 6.3 Protest poster hanging on nuclear base gate. *Photo: Author's photograph*



Figure 6.4 Garelochhead graffiti. *Photo: Author's photograph*

The Garelochhead graffiti implied a clash between the intentions of the performers' transformations and the non-performance world where the meanings collided and not always in a way that the performers wanted them to. For the protestors, the transformations

of space were symbolically positive and represented their commitment to peace and ending violence. Unfortunately, the poorly chosen place (namely the side of a council-run youth centre) communicated another message, that of vandalism. Transforming the non-performance world in this unauthorised way aggravated non-performers and potential audience members because it forced them to engage with the performance rather than inviting them into it. This provides an interesting comparison to more subversive political action of the terrorist attack discussed in the following chapter where space was brutally and shockingly transformed through the bodies of both the actors and the audience.

This discussion leads us to consider the audience in greater detail. Until now, I have focused on the intentional, reflective transformations of space by the performers and how the relationship between groups was complicated by the location in question. However, it is important to recognize that this performance space produced a dichotomy in the volitional state of the audience members because either they were there because they really wanted to be there (as a performer, a fascinated passer-by or member of the media) or they were part of the involuntary, mobile audience that had to use the road for other purposes (such as residents of the surrounding area or as workers at the Faslane base). For the latter audience the performance was a by-product of their routine use of the road.

The involuntary audience was more complicated than the one that had chosen to be there. In the Stop the War Coalition performance there were few performers and relatively few

transformations in both the appearance of the space and the uses of it. The performers were mainly huddled under a white gazebo at the side of the road so the involuntary audience only had to see them for 5 or 6 seconds as its members passed through the roundabout or through the gates. Furthermore, as this performance was at the beginning of a year-long blockade, the presence of protestors was still fairly novel and not yet blighted by the negative association that came with Faslane 365's responsibility for extensive road blockades and the subsequent local backlash later in the year.

When the performer numbers got large enough to transform the space more radically – transformations that made the road a blockade and the roundabout a performance arena filled with singing protestors as happened at the Big Blockade – the undesired performance world was more intrusive. In addition to finding the performance more difficult to ignore, the involuntary audience (say, a family en route to the local school) also found its use of the space fundamentally transformed. For example, in the case of the severe blockading caused by the Big Blockade, a family's five minute drive to school turned into two or three hours of sitting in single-line traffic - possibly involving their watching the performance, if they were close enough to the roundabout, but probably not.

Exploring the performance space of the Faslane protest has shown that these unconventional political actors, like the conventional actors explored earlier in the thesis, chose to stage their performance in a symbolically resonant location in order to give it added meaning and impact. Their outsider status as regards traditional political representation meant that the Faslane

performers' ability to control this staging was less authoritative than that of the conventional political actors. Moreover, the transformations of performance space were more extreme lasting for at least a few days and the blockading disruption lasting a full year. This disrupted the use of space and generated an involuntary audience for the performance. So, whilst the protestors' goals were to encourage a deliberative dialogue on the issue of nuclear disarmament, the techniques that they used to achieve that goal were based around actions that were more subversive and did not involve deliberation with the surrounding population.

6.2 Lived performance: embodying protest

To some extent the theory of deliberative democracy privileges a discourse approach to decision-making centred on speech acts. However, as Coole notes, “when we see others we recognize the material performances that accompany their speech acts” (Coole, 2007: 421). In the political sphere the body is somewhat paradoxically, “its most visible and invisible component” (Coole, 2007: 412). Political communications, for example, are dominated by a preoccupation with the “anaemic relationship between message content and...individual or aggregate responses” (Bennett and Entman, 2001: 5), as evidenced by the abundance of survey-based opinion polling referenced in academic papers and media alike. This type of approach has its merits but it neglects the importance of experience in the political sphere. This is one of the key strengths of the metaphor of politics-as-performance because, as Boal argues, “the first word of the theatrical vocabulary is the human body” (Boal quoted in Auslander, 1999: 99) and as such I use the metaphor to focus on the “lived bodiliness” of the protest experience (Fortier, 2002: 39).

6.2.1 Embodying resistance

Conventional forms of political participation in a deliberative democracy would seem to put a special emphasis on the discursive aspects of communication - the Habermasian idea of the ‘ideal

speech situation' (Habermas, 1989) is a case in point. Parliamentary debate and writing a letter to your MP to speak on your behalf in Parliament are also key examples (Pateman, 1970). Moreover, the rituals of deliberative democracy in conventional political arenas such as Parliament tend to be strictly non-tactile.

However, my experience of research at Faslane highlighted the fact that the activity of protest would appear to be a highly physical, embodied act. A simple example of this point can be found in the unpopular Stop the War Coalition protest. Despite the support that was evidenced for the protest online, and the accessibility of the performance space, only three people actually turned up to the live performance. As such, it was an 'unsuccessful' protest that did not attract any media attention or visible public support. In contrast, the Big Blockade involved over 500 performing bodies and was successful in gaining media coverage and the public support of elite figures to the cause. Whilst I have argued in both the Blair/Brown case and the SNP campaign that being seen to be present at certain locations was important for the political actors, this case suggested that despite the rhetoric of a 'virtual politics' if there is still a place for the live performer in politics it is certainly at the live political protest.

Performance theory is not alone in its focus on the lived body and in fact it overlaps with sociological approaches that problematise the body and our experience of it (Bendelow and Williams, 1998; Shilling, 2003). Much of this overlap concerns the interest that both approaches have in the body as the site for ideological struggle or resistance. Their starting premise is that the human body is not a

fixed and static entity but engaged in a transformative process of becoming from birth. For some sociological theorists this constant making and re-making of bodily identity is socially constructed making it a vehicle for controlling social norms but also vulnerable to political subversion (Connell, 1995; Butler, 1990). However, this is a description of the experience of bodies generally and the subversions are not necessarily achieved by conscious transformation. Performance, on the other hand, describes a particular case where the performer is engaged in a conscious manipulation of their bodies, a reflexive public practice, to make them symbolically meaningful and to engage them as a site for ideological symbolism if not subversion.

These two perspectives come together if we consider the case of the Faslane protestors. Their mere presence was an act of resistance because they used their bodies performatively to create an alternative world. Where just as the performance of the drag queen is an expression of criticism of conventionally performed gender roles, so the Faslane protestors, by simply being there, challenged the idea that the Polaris missile system is acceptable. Moreover, the protestors at the Big Blockade performance, were more than just 'there'. They used their bodies to perform symbolic actions such as singing protest songs, blockading the base and getting arrested. In what follows I consider these actions as part of the experience of the Faslane performance.

6.2.2 Threat, sacrifice and the performing body

The bodily experience of this performance concerned the notions of threat and sacrifice. Even though the performers may have achieved

Stanislavski's ideal of temporarily entering 'a new life' (Fortier, 2002: 45) they were doing so in the context of the same body that was just as vulnerable to the same threats. In this way, the arenas of threat and pain are where the performance world and the non-performance world collide. Of course, the idea of sacrifice has a heritage in democratic theory as it has been used as an exclusionary device from full membership as citizens. For example, in Ancient Greece, slaves, women and children were excluded on the basis that they had nothing to give up (Conboy et al., 1997). So the body, threat, sacrifice and the political are all interrelated.

To expand on the ideas of threat and sacrifice, let me start by discussing the experience of protesting itself. In the Stop the War performance the weather was terrible and this had a detrimental effect on the performance that the actors could give. It was a cold, bleak and very wet Scottish day and consequently the performers spent six hours in raincoats hunched up under a gazebo by the roadside. This does not compare favourably with the bodily experiences of Blair, Brown, Salmond and Sturgeon whose performances were often conducted inside buildings or with the possibility of other comforts like campaign tour buses or helicopters. Any performance is a negotiation between the performing mind and the performing body (Schechner, 2003: 44-45) and the uncomfortable physical conditions had an effect on the performing minds of the protestors – morale was low, they did not engage in any of the planned protest activities and in fact some left before the end of the protest.

In contrast, the Big Blockade was staged in much more pleasant

weather and this appeared to raise the protestors' morale. Nonetheless, the experience was hardly comfortable. The blockade started in the freezing, early hours of the morning and lasted until three p.m and that, certainly in my own experience, is a long time to be standing around in the open air on the west coast of Scotland. In addition to the discomfort from the weather, the acts of protest involved an element of threat and sacrifice. Specifically, the act of sitting on cold, hard concrete for hours whilst chained into lock-on tubes (a home-made device using wire meshing and papier-mâché that locks the user's arm to another protestor) is sore, unpleasant and possibly health-threatening to the very young, disabled or old. More extreme protestors actually super-glued their hands together and had to be taken to hospital to have the glue dissolved.

One might question why these political actors exposed their bodies to such discomfort and in some cases physical threat. To answer this, I would look to the response given by a disabled protestor Jean Taylor when asked this same question by a TV interviewer. She said, "some people might say that I'm being totally irresponsible about my health but what is in there beyond those gates is evil....I know it is dangerous but I don't care. This is more important" (TheHerald, 2007). This performer expressed a sort of Brechtian *gestus* (Brecht, 1964) in how she used her body to perform a single, physical action that symbolized her ideological struggle. For this disabled performer the discomfort of the lock-on tubes was part of the meaning of her performance and her sacrifice communicated how important the cause was to her. This importance of performing pain or making an intentional sacrifice in public is

seen, of course, in other types of protests – the highly visible starvation of IRA activist Bobby Sands (1981), or the Iranian exiles who set themselves alight in London (2003) being potent examples – and will be fundamental as I explore the terrorist case study in the next chapter.

The main threat that the Faslane performers suffered from, however, was the threat of arrest. This involved the sacrifice of liberty, one of the most highly valued rights as a citizen. During the Big Blockade there were 70 arrests, and throughout the course of the year there were over 1000. The arrests were an important feature of Faslane 365 because, like the self-imposed discomfort experienced by protestors, the activity of ‘getting yourself arrested’ symbolized how strongly the performers felt about the cause. The spiralling numbers, kept tally by the Faslane 365 website, showed growing support. In addition to this, the arrests generated wider publicity for the Faslane 365 cause – a protest is not necessarily a newsworthy event but 70 people getting arrested in one morning is.

There are parallels here with the conventional political actors. For the protestors ‘getting themselves arrested’ represented their dissent in the public sphere and their commitment to their cause. In a similar way the activity of ‘getting themselves elected’ publicly represented the public service of the politician and their commitment to representing their constituency. We might also consider that getting elected entails a loss of freedom as well, as the political actor moves from the role of private citizen to public official. These new duties and indeed, more widely, their prominent position in the public sphere under public scrutiny means that they no longer have

the freedom to act as they wish.

Moving on from the larger-scale effects of the arrest process, the micro-performances enacted by individual performers in the process of 'getting arrested' were also telling. In addition to the singing of protest songs, many of the performers feigned complete limpness when the police approached to break their blockade. These melodramatic, theatrical performances not only hampered the process of dismantling the blockade by complicating the police effort, it also elongated the time that the performers were on-stage. The protestors literally were 'making a scene' through their micro-performances as they were physically dragged offstage (by three or four police per performer) for processing. This is an interesting example of political action by inactivity or passive resistance and represents the performers as both peaceful and unthreatening.

This method of performing passive, embodied resistance has attained a level of conventionality in the public sphere through its heritage in the history of campaigning and, in particular, its use in the US civil rights movement (Cook, 1998; Newman, 2004). Using the metaphor of politics-as-performance highlights this kind of political action as an embodied, physical approach that encourages a silent performance. It thus offers a different kind of deliberation out-with the norms of spoken discourse.

6.2.3 The activity of blockading

The main activity that resulted in the performers being arrested was blockading the road surrounding the North Gate by using their

bodies as a physical barrier to prevent access to the base. Placing their bodies in the road in front of moving trucks echoes the issues of threat that I mention above. However, the simplicity of standing unarmed in front of something so institutional and industrial as a nuclear base tied into a key theme of the Faslane 365 movement, which was the fragility of human life that the nuclear submarines were designed to destroy.

Another theme that was embodied in the activity of blockading was that of unity. Most of the performers locked-on together in groups of at least three. Being joined with others not only made the process of breaking the blockade more difficult but it appeared to keep the morale of the performers high and allowed for more collective activities such as singing or chanting. There is a sense in which an “ensemble performance” with “a cast of others” is especially useful in the representation of individual dissent because it strengthens the representative claims of the action (Lovell, 2003: 2). Furthermore, physically joining their bodies together had the effect of turning the individuals into one large unified force. In some ways, the performers’ actions echoed the idea of the sovereignty of the ‘body politic’ where political power is situated in the body of the electorate.

We might compare this physical tactility to the conventional actors of Blair, Brown, Sturgeon and Salmond. As I noted, Salmond and Sturgeon’s physical proximity in the SNP advertising campaign echoed a heteronormative theme in their relationship and similarly both Blair and Brown were physically tactile with their spouses (for example, holding hands or whispering in their ears whilst posing for

photos) as they left and arrived at No 10 on the handover day. More widely, the tactility of conventional political actors in the public sphere is often confined to symbolic handshakes, or indeed the stereotype of kissing babies during election campaigns. In general the tactile access as regards the performing bodies of conventional actors is tightly controlled because of the possible threat of physical assault and potential embarrassment. This case, on the other hand, showed that while the police and bodyguards of politician-performers protected their bodies from being touched or violated, the Faslane protestors' bodies were accessible not just to other performers but to the police as well.

In a different way, physically occupying this space (rather than solely relying on online protest activities) the performers could achieve their goal of 'making visible' the proposed immorality of the nuclear base. In addition to 'making it visible' by physically bearing witness, the blockade action forced an audience at least in the live sense because travelling vehicles were stuck in the road for a few hours with nothing to do but watch the performance. In this way the work of the base was also disrupted.

This leads us to consider what kind of threat the protestors' bodies actually posed. By putting their bodies in the road, the performers stopped access to the base and, in theory, prevented the democratically elected UK government from achieving its goals. Considering this was a minority action leads us again to question the deliberative goals of the performers. Blockading, understood in this context, could be interpreted as a form of bargaining, where the performance of a threat was not a conversation but a tool to achieve

their anti-nuclear goals. In this way there was a tension between the organisation of the live performance and the deliberative aims and indeed context generated through the mediatised performances of Faslane 365.

In analysing the lived experience of Faslane I demonstrated the importance of presence in this form of unconventional political representation. The protestors' embodied representation was highlighted by their performance of actions concerned with sacrifice or personal threat (through pain, discomfort and loss of freedom) which generated symbolic gestures of their resistance and dissent. Their deliberative participation centred in the experience of their bodies suggested that deliberation is not purely a discourse-based activity such as that seen in Parliament. The Faslane performers' physical sensations such as coldness, hunger, pain or tiredness had an effect on the type of performance that they could give and thusly the quality of their deliberative effort. However, I also noted that their action of blockading was not particularly deliberative especially in the context of the local users of the road. In some ways these unconventional political performers, because they did not have a readymade stage for their representation like Blair, Brown and the SNP, had to generate one by being more subversive and using bargaining tactics to increase their visibility in the public sphere.

6.3. From Efficacy to Entertainment: 'Carnival of Resistance'

Performance is known as the 'dangerous art' because of the interesting position that it holds between efficacy and entertainment (Hilton, 1987; Schechner, 2003). On the one hand, performances are used for entertainment but on the other they are also powerful didactic tools that can be used to sway the minds of the spectators. Perhaps this is because they create alternative worlds and, in some cases, full utopias that are made more achievable by 'becoming real' if only for the duration of the performance. This duality was employed by the Faslane performers as they used the Carnival of Resistance at the Big Blockade as both a form of entertainment and a didactic tool to achieve the protestors' goal of inserting themselves into the public sphere.

6.3.1 Cathartic or Coercive - Plato and Aristotle

There are opposing views about the didactic uses of performance that have ancient roots in debates between Aristotle and Plato. Aristotle viewed performance (specifically drama) as having a purgative, cathartic effect on the spectators (Aristotle et al., 1953). Viewed in such a way, performance arts are used to air public grievances but ultimately to maintain the status quo by offering a cleansing release of bad feeling and emotion. From this perspective, the Faslane protest would be seen as a mechanism through which the grievances of these particular citizens would become known or, more

pertinently, seen in order to assuage the protestors' anger about this issue before it came to revolution.

Plato, on the other hand, viewed performances with much more suspicion, going so far as to ban poets from his ideal state (Plato et al., 2000). Their ability to present other worlds in such a convincing fashion, to almost bring them into being, is, following Plato's view, too subversive and teaches bad morals rather than purges them. This idea was extended by Marxist practitioners like Brecht as a way of engaging the spectator into subversive political action after the performance – of turning audiences into performers, spectators into spect-actors (Brecht, 1964).

If we apply these two threads of thinking to the role of protest in deliberative democracy we might see it either as performing a cathartic release for citizens' anger or of exasperating concerns in an almost coercive way that undermines deliberation and consensus altogether. Both of these themes of catharsis and subversion were present at the Carnival of Resistance, which was enacted by the Faslane protestors at the curtain call of the movement, the Big Blockade.

6.3.2 The 'Carnival of Resistance'

In theatrical performances, the curtain call is the point at the very end of the performance when all the characters are invited back to the stage for a final farewell before the performance has ended.

Similarly, Faslane 365 ended by inviting all the groups that had blockaded throughout the year back to the performance space for a 'Carnival of Resistance' - there were clowns, people on stilts and mimes, and these performers were singing, dancing and engaging in general anarchic merriment.

The concept of 'carnival' is well-known as a collective "secular ritual" that has its roots in the Feast of Fools festivals of the middle ages (Gilmore, 1998: 26; Bakhtin et al., 1994). A carnival is a public, community spectacle where performers use popular theatre to parody the leading authorities through the grotesque, buffoonery and farce (Boje, 2001: 437). Traditionally carnivals would involve vicious parodies of authority figures (such as the church and state) performing 'grotesque' actions such as drinking excessively, excreting or simulating taboo carnal practices. It would also involve many transformations of the body in the form of cross-dressing or masks. The frenzied, anarchic and emotive format is a classic example of performing having a cathartic function for the populace as these events were tolerated for one day without major, direct upheaval after they finished.

We see echoes of this idea in the Faslane carnival in the bright costumes of the Faslane protestors, the clown makeup, the tuneless and disorganized singing of protest songs (similar in form to traditional carnival songs with their simple rhymes and repetitive structure), the anarchic structure, and the impromptu dancing. Interestingly, the Faslane carnival, like other carnivals, was an example of total, 'phatic' theatre (Schechner, 2003: 245-257). It appealed to, or assaulted, all the senses of the live audience with the

sounds of singing, the feel of the cold, and the smell and taste of vegetarian cooking provided to keep the blockaders' spirits up. The experience contrasted sharply with the more conventional performances seen in Parliament or the conference hall that offered an experience aimed more directly at the auditory rather than visual senses. This performance was also more spectacular, more mobile and less controlled.

Irreverent humour and parody were used to a much greater extent than in conventional political performances. An example of 'parodying authority figures' (in addition to the implied subversive parody of clowning in general) were the banners that included images of the base but with flowers replacing the nuclear warheads. It was also interesting that, as a member of the live audience, it seemed to me that the authority figures themselves were made performers and complicit in this game. First, there was a farcical absurdity to seeing six grown-ups sitting in the middle of the road in front of a nuclear base, locked together with pieces of chicken mesh and papier mache, and singing protest songs that they did not necessarily know well. It made a mockery of the base and of the road as a danger. It was even more farcical to watch the police attempt to remove the protestors (who feigned dramatic collapses), or to watch the police chase down clowns on stilts in order to arrest them. In this way the context of the performance put the police in the role of 'buffoons' in that they appeared incapable, humorous and confused. By becoming part of the performance they thus lost some of their authority. This provided a very different comparison to the authoritative figures of the police who guarded the performance

locations of Downing Street or Parliament.

It is important to note, however, that this off-footing of the police was not the norm for the Faslane 365 movement. At the Stop the War Coalition blockade the police outnumbered the protestors 40:1 and there was no protest action. As a result, the massive police presence actually served to make a mockery of the protestors because it highlighted their poor turnout and failure to achieve their goals. Moreover, the visibility of the police presence, with their squad cars and dogs, provided a more interesting spectacle than the protestors whilst highlighting the extensive police resources that were being absorbed by policing Faslane 365 (something that became an important plot line later in the year).

6.3.3 A Theatre of the Absurd?

This discussion brings us to the political and subversive uses of carnival. The Carnival of Resistance was intended to be more than a catharsis to alleviate the grievances of these particular protestors. The literature from Faslane 365 and the testimonies of the individual groups suggested that the protestors also wanted the performance to urge the audience into political action upon seeing it (Faslane 365 website; Faslane 365 Resource Pack). There are a number of approaches that performance theory has to offer to achieve such a reaction but the impression I had from my experience of the Carnival of Resistance was that this was a sort of 'theatre of the absurd' (Esslin, 1974).

Theatre of the absurd, with its links to the Dada movement, is based around the concept of using the surreal to highlight the existential crisis of humanity by subverting the traditions of narrative structure and coherent moral message. The Faslane carnival had many surreal moments as I have mentioned above (the church choir singing in front of the nuclear base on the road being a case in point) however, a more specific example of this type of performance can be seen in the 'Faslane squirrel'. One performer dressed as a squirrel ran erratically around the performance area sporting a banner that said 'Nuts to Trident', eventually locking on to a blockade and getting arrested. Spectators were then confronted with the extremely bizarre scene of a 'squirrel' being cuffed and taken away for 'processing' by police (Figure 6.5 and Figure 6.6).



Figure 6.5 "Faslane squirrel" blockading. *Photo: Faslane 365 Website*



Figure 6.6 “Faslane squirrel” being arrested. *Photo: Faslane 365 Website*

Whilst there are coherent messages one might draw from the squirrel, in particular a theme of nature versus industry, it is not immediately obvious. Going back to the idea that theatre can be used as a didactic tool, confronting the audience with the surreal destabilizes that which they normally take as uncontested.

This type of didactic performance echoes that of Artaud’s Theatre of Cruelty, where the audience is confronted with the truth and horror of the ideological message of the piece and finds it so horrible that its members are basically forced into action (Artaud and Richards, 1958). This type of ‘cruelty’ to the audience was not really evident at the Faslane carnival. However, as I argue in the next chapter, it is employed in other non-conventional forms of participation such as terrorist attacks.

The absurdist approach was successful for the Faslane carnival. It was funny and highly visible. It attracted attention by being out of

the ordinary and by juxtaposing something so entertaining and light-hearted with a nuclear weapons base. Interestingly, the absurdist approach fit well with the protest cause. A salient point about the anti-Trident argument is that nuclear war could lead to an unimaginable amount of human suffering. The gravity of such a situation is exactly the sort of existential angst that a theatre of the absurd is intended to highlight. As an observer, my personal experience was that it brought to mind the passage from Camus's *Myth of Sisyphus* that 'this malaise in front of man's own inhumanity, this incalculable letdown when faced with the image of what we are, this 'nausea'...also is the absurd' (Camus, 1955: 29).

6.3.4 Canonical and subversive forms

Carnivals allows for a 'polyphony' of voices to be heard. They are festivals where people can speak as individuals and class structures are put aside for the duration of the carnival (Bakhtin et al., 1994). Elements of this could be seen at the Big Blockade, especially if we consider the different groups that were present. Traditional 'authority' figures such as members of the clergy, academics, Members of the Scottish Parliament (in fact, the curtain call even received public support from First Minister Alex Salmond) were present alongside less empowered figures such as anarchist and women's groups. The unifying focus of the carnival performance overcame the fact that these figures had very different ideological motivations (and social positions) with a sort of 'horizontal

solidarity' (Gilmore, 1998: 35).

It seems prudent to consider the interplay between the subversive and the canonical forms at the Faslane carnival in greater depth. The appearance of canonical and subversive forms next to one another permeated the performance. The disciplined, traditional music of the church choir contrasted with boisterous, irreverent protest singing. The impromptu ceilidh dancing contrasted with the organized formation of the police. Even the conservative, smart-casual clothing of the MSPs contrasted with the colourful tie-dyed costumes of the hippies and clowns. These forms (of music, clothing and movement) are considered at least opposing if not conflicting in most settings because they tend to represent a deeper ideological conflict. Anarchists, for example, tend to oppose organized religion and vice versa because they stand for completely different things. One might argue (and indeed this is implied in the Faslane 365 literature) that the polyphony of carnival created a context where those voices could coexist peacefully.

This was, perhaps, an overly optimistic assessment. The Faslane carnival showed that whilst carnival can subvert the existing order and promote this horizontal solidarity, it also has the capacity to reinforce or 'enhance' it as well (Gilmore, 1998: 35). The groups did not mix, either spatially or in the activities in which they engaged. There was also an inequality in whose voices were heard the loudest. For example, the press interviewed the MSPs and the clergy more often than the representatives of the politically extreme groups present (STV, 2007). This reinforces the problem of mediatization as regards the public sphere where some groups are given higher

precedence than others (Glasgow University Media Group., 1980).

In addition to their ideological differences, the different types of performer had conflicting efficacious aims, which were made clear in the interviews they gave and in each group's individual mission statements.²⁷ The more authoritative groups such as the clergy were not seeking to 'overthrow' the system but rather to make visible their opposition to this particular issue. Their protest, their visible support of this cause, allowed them to act as representative moral role models who were participating in the political system, in some ways echoing Brown's citation of the Good Samaritan. On the other hand, the anarchist groups wanted the performance to disrupt the existing order altogether by making the audience question not only nuclear armament but the whole concept of the state. So, rather than smoothing over the differences of class, age and ideology, the carnival, in some ways, actually brought these factors into sharper relief.

²⁷ (STV, 2007; Lowe, 2007; TheHerald, 2007; Zelter, 2008)

6. 4 Actions and Plot: heroes and villains

Whereas the Carnival of Resistance did not seem to follow the conventions of plot and logically-related action, the overarching Faslane 365 performance did follow the traditional western drama plot of a coherent beginning, middle and end permeated with a sense of conflict, choice, change and resolution (Turner, 1988b; Bal, 1997).

What was especially interesting about the Faslane 365 performance was the competition over control of the dominant narrative, with different groups trying to characterize each other as the heroes and villains. This process of defining heroes and villains was present in both the Blair/Brown and SNP cases with each political actor striving to categorise him or herself as a particular kind of hero in their representative role. In both cases as political actors attempted to author or re-script the narrative in their own way, they also had to act against other actors who offered alternative characterisations of them as villains. However, there was much less controversy over the sequence of events that took place than in the Faslane performance. When considered as a whole, the fact that this performance was mostly invisible (the individual 48 hour performances had limited audiences) meant that the actual sequence of events became open to debate amongst groups of performers.

6.4.1 The narrative arc of Faslane 365

The organisation of Faslane 365, with different protest groups taking

over the blockade in 48 hour shifts over the course of a year, allowed for the development of an overarching narrative. The performance of Faslane 365 constantly moved forward in that each new group brought new transformations of space, protest actions, characters and arrests. In total there were over 1000 arrests (170 of which were at the Big Blockade) and 66 prosecutions to date (Faslane 365 Website). The audience, and indeed the organisers, could thus assess the impact of each mini-performance on the wider movement and follow its progression throughout the year. This meant that the roles of protestors who stayed at the performance site long-term or took part in the 48hour blockades were constantly evolving as the norms of their performance shifted.

In addition to the sense of change, Faslane 365 also fulfilled the criteria of offering a choice. One might argue that the whole idea of non-violent protest in a deliberative democracy actually presupposes choice because protesting involves offering an alternative view and the audience can choose to take sides. The aim of a protest is usually to define the performers as 'heroes' and the object of their grievances as the villain. With the Faslane performance, the diorama effect meant that there was not necessarily a choice about whether the audience could watch the performance or not. However there was still a choice as to which side they could take: that of Faslane 365 or that of the UK government.

Finally, there were many layers of conflict in the Faslane 365 performance as performers took on different roles, new characters were cast and the plot developed over the course of the year. Each group tried to control authorship of the performance and the

narrative by engaging in a constant relational struggle in defining the heroes and the villains. In the next section, I describe some of these characters and suggest how they affected the movement as a whole.

6.4.2 Cast and Characters

The best place to start is with the protestors themselves. In addition to the twin themes of 'bringing people to witness' and 'demonstrating a range of serious concerns', the protestors claimed to be 'committed to making their visions of a just and peaceful future visible' in a non-violent manner (Faslane 365 website). In this way, they adopted the classic Western hero characterisation of moral crusader for justice and peace. However, due to the structure of Faslane 365, the protest groups differed in their approach not only to the activity of protesting but in their ideological grievance with the nuclear base. As I have already mentioned, when they were all brought together at the Big Blockade these ideological differences were apparent. They were also visible throughout the year as some of the groups used Faslane 365 as a platform for their own causes (such as the women's movement) and some just went along with the leading Faslane 365 narrative. This caused a subtle, underlying conflict that was evident at the Stop the War Coalition blockade. The Stop the War protestors and the Faslane 365 organisers kept themselves spatially separated during the performance and this reflected their differing ideological perspectives in that the Stop the War Coalition was against the 'war on terror', specifically, rather

than against war in general. As such the performative aims of the protestors, the tactic of organising together in a larger group to become visible in the public sphere, took precedent over deliberation amongst them about the finer points of the anti-nuclear argument.

An important sub-set within the protestors was the 'celebrity' characters that included a number of MPs, MSPs and well-known singers and actors. Like the SNP campaign performance, the Faslane 365 organisers made this group 'special' by devoting more air and web space to making their views heard. In particular, their presence at the Big Blockade was important in attracting media attention as well as some high profile arrests. The Faslane organisers' structural highlighting of these celebrity performers, especially in the media section of the website, again highlights an uneven commitment to deliberation. Even though the Faslane 365 movement expressed a commitment to dialogue (Faslane Website) the organisers privileged the voices of these celebrities in order to increase the visibility of the performance.

In addition to the narrative of justice and peace that the protestors expounded throughout the year, at the Big Blockade they were keen to reiterate the success and popularity of the year-long protest, using it as evidence of further support for their cause in the wider electorate. In media interviews and on the website, there was an attempt to associate the popular, colourful Big Blockade performance with the overall Faslane 365 movement rather than isolate it as a one off event (TheHerald, 2007; Lowe, 2007). This can be seen in the final version of the Faslane 365 website, which features a prominent photo of the Big Blockade and the caption 'A wonderful end to a year of

resistance' (Figure 6.7).



Figure 6.7 Screen shot of Faslane 365 website. *Image: Author's own*

However, the protestors were not the only characters in the Faslane 365 narrative. As previously indicated a second important group of characters were the police who had to maintain a strong presence at the base throughout the duration of the protest. The relationship between the police and protestors was interesting because of the tension between the democratic right to protest and civil disobedience. In this performance, the protest was authorised but the blockades of the road and base were not. Given the protestors' aim to 'impede the nuclear base', clashes with the police were almost inevitable and this provided a constant sense of conflict and tension for the wider audience.

More interestingly, the police generated a different narrative about the Faslane 365 performance based on the money that it cost the taxpayer to police it. In addition to the manpower that it cost them, it reportedly cost the taxpayer £1.7million a month to police the protest and this, the police argued, took officers away from other, more important jobs (TheHerald, 2007; Alexandroni, 2007; Robertson, 2007; Thompson, 2006). This argument quickly undermined the authority and indeed representative claims of the protestors by putting them at odds with the rest of the population. Even if 'the people of Scotland' were against the activities of the nuclear base (a dubious claim at best), the 'bobbies on the beat' debate was of higher political importance and so trumped the protestors' justification for being there. Plus, in the climate of fear surrounding terror attacks (made more tangible by the proximity of the Glasgow airport attack in 2007), the high police numbers interpellated the protestors as a threat. It would seem that the debates over security versus liberty in a post- 9/11 and indeed post 7/7 democracy affected the protestors' ability to play the heroes and made it easier for them to be characterised as villains.

At the Big Blockade, the police also put forward a different narrative that undermined the protestors. Whilst the Faslane 365 group claimed that the movement had been a success all year, the police expressed some surprise that the Big Blockade had attracted so much support. One video reporter noted that despite the rhetoric, the protest had actually been quite unpopular all year with only two or three protestors at the base at any given time and the fact that it only maintained a protest presence on half of the 365 days in the year

(TheHerald, 2007). According to this narrative my experience of the Stop the War blockade was not an exception but rather the rule. This characterized the protestors as a vocal minority supporting a cause that was not that popular and, by extension of this unpopularity, implied that their blockade action was undemocratic. In terms of deliberation, it suggested that the Faslane protestors had used their highly disruptive performance to hijack the public sphere for their own ends rather than engage in political deliberation in recognised equal terms.

Joining forces with the police were another group of characters that we might describe as the 'local people'. By this I mean the groups of people for whom the protest disrupted their normal use of the space such as school teachers, parents, the elderly and workers at the base. This was evident from my research experience at the Stop the War Coalition blockade a month after the start of Faslane 365 where I was told of the unpopularity of the protest by people in the village shop at Garelochhead as I gathered local newspapers for research. But it escalated to such an extent that in May 2007 the locals formed their own protest group 'Peninsula 24/7' and performed a series of marches and protests against the Faslane protestors, at one point attracting a turnout of over 100 people. Peninsula 24/7 undercut the moral high ground of the Faslane performers by characterising them as villains who caused local children to miss exams or the elderly to cancel hospital appointments (Paisley, 2007). Moreover, their proposed closure of the base would lead to 10,000 redundancies, many from the local area. In addition to these practical issues, there was a nationalist dimension to the

conflict with many of the Faslane performers being young, white, middle-class and English (although reportedly protestors travelled from France, Japan and Germany) compared with the working Scottish families involved in Peninsula 24/7 (Herbert, 2007).

The involvement of Peninsula 24/7 in the Faslane performance showed that it acted as a site for deliberation and political participation in the local area. In this regard the protestors thus achieved their goal of encouraging dialogue on the issue of nuclear disarmament, even if the dialogue was not as positive as they would have liked. However, it also demonstrated that the Faslane protestors used the less deliberative technique of restricting the use of space for other citizens without their previous consent. Whilst this helped to achieve their performative goals, it seriously undermined their performance for the wider audience.

A final set of characters in the Faslane 365 performance consisted of the print and television journalists who were very important in generating an audience for the protest given the diorama effect of the peripheral location. I discuss the mediatised performance in greater depth in the next section but it is worth emphasising that the conflict between the police, protestors and local people became the overarching meta-narrative in the portrayal of Faslane 365 in the media. The irony of protesting against protestors was considered more newsworthy and, to some extent, overshadowed reporting of the original aims of the Faslane 365 protestors.

Reflecting on Faslane 365, I have argued that the plot was not fixed by the original script from the Faslane 365 organisers or even

by the actions of the Faslane protestors themselves, but was in fact constantly evolving as different groups joined in the authorship of the narrative throughout the year. In this way, the Faslane 365 performance acted as an informal site for deliberation where anyone could get involved by making the move from audience member to performer with relative ease. It thus encouraged the political participation of many citizens. However, the representative claims of the unconventional Faslane 365 political actors were highly contested as were both the authority and democratic credentials of their performance techniques. There was thus a tension between the deliberative and representative aims of the Faslane protestors, where the deliberative context was generated by the less deliberative technique of blockading in order to insert themselves into the public sphere.

6.5. Dislocation: mediatised performance

Throughout this thesis I have focused on describing the performances of the political actors under study, arguing that separating them into 'mediatised' and 'live' generates an unstable distinction which fails to take into account the relational nature of 'liveness'. As such, in the Blair/Brown case the performances I explored were exclusively mediatised, in the SNP case I used a mixture of mediatised and 'live' experience of the campaign performance and in both cases I noted the differences in terms of the possibility of audience interaction and also the role of the 'live' audience as performers in the mediatised performance. In the SNP case I also noted that the performers produced their own mediatised performances outside the traditional mass media outlets such as television or newspapers in the form of SNPtV. In this case the Faslane performance highlighted the role of the mass media as an intermediary factor that affected the construction of the performance in a way that was more obvious than in the previous two cases. As such, the Faslane performers' response to generate their own mediatised performances online was a key feature of this case.

6.5.1 Who's staging who: media democracy and Faslane 365

In a deliberative democracy the media widens the public sphere by allowing deliberation to take place out-with the confines of space and time that 'live' deliberation requires. It also scrutinises the political sphere and facilitates political communication both between citizens

and political representatives, and amongst citizens themselves. However the mass media's role in deliberation is problematic. In addition to the well-versed problems of the evaporation of power to media elites and their ability to set the political agenda, Meyer has argued that the media have colonized the process of deliberation to the extent that there is now a media democracy rather than more deliberative models (Meyer, 2002; Norris, 1999). On this view political representation becomes an aesthetic process of appealing to a populist media audience rather than a process of rational deliberation.

In the context of the metaphor of politics-as-performance I have sought to describe political representation as a form of aesthetic representation. In the cases of Blair/Brown and the SNP, the mass media re-presented the performances in a different form, such as the clips of Blair's resignation speech on the news, or a description of Salmond's Rosyth field landing in a newspaper. Not only do these re(representations) shape the way that the audience receives the political actors' original performances but they might be viewed as separate performances in and of themselves, with media commentators producing counter performance immediately upon viewing the event.

This leads back to the question of staging and the control that political actors have over this process. The potential audience of large media outlets, such as major television news channels, compared with political actors' own versions of the mediated performance problematises the relationship between the mass media and political actors. Assuming they want to access this audience, it

means that, political actors must stage their performance in ways that makes it appealing to these popular media formats through, for example, the use of soundbites, celebrity performers and humour. Similarly, the media can stage the political actor's performance in a way that is most interesting to their audience, by, for example, shortening it, adding analysis or placing it within an historical context.

The relationship between conventional political actors and the media has been well documented and it is important to note that it is not one-way (Street, 2001; Norris, 1999). In the Blair/Brown and SNP cases I noted how their roles as official representatives or organisations provided these political actors with a stage in the public sphere and the media followed and remediated their performances online, on television and in print. However, conversely, the media were clearly invited to be members of the live audience and given access that the ordinary citizen would not get (Crampton, 2007). One analysis of this situation is that it provided the citizen with another form of political representation through the actions of these media actors. On the other hand, it still maintains the role of the audience as one of spectatorship to these elite deliberations rather than one of interactive participation.

Unconventional political actors like the Faslane 365 performers do not necessarily enjoy this close relationship with the media, not least because they do not have the heritage of performances of authoritative political power in the public sphere. Moreover, they do not have a predetermined possibility for political efficacy except through their actions. Whereas the conventional actors'

representative role was innately linked to the exercise of state power (which is intrinsically newsworthy for the citizen-audience), the Faslane 365 protestors' representation had no political ramifications in itself until they took certain actions. Their setting of the performance in a peripheral location with a diffuse, long-term goal contributed to this lack of newsworthiness.

The unreceptive mass media environment was reflected in the complete lack of coverage of the Stop the War protest, despite the invitation to the media online, in any of the national or local newspapers or television programmes. On the other hand, the Big Blockade, with its many arrests, eye-catching Carnival of Resistance and celebrity performers attracted coverage in many national newspapers and on some of the BBC's Scottish news programmes, notably 'STV news'. Here we see echoes of Auslander's (1999) assertion that the live performance appropriates the features of the mediatised one and the theatrical tactics of the protestors would seem to provide an example in this regard.

It was especially interesting that the coverage by the mass media around the time of the Big Blockade gave high priority to the protestors' relationship with the Peninsula 24/7 group in contextualising the performance. In retrospective summaries of the year the Faslane protestors were at times cast as the villains against the heroic local people (Herbert, 2007; TheHerald, 2007; STV, 2007). By staging the debate between the two groups and taking sides in this way, the mass media contributed to the deliberative process but in a way that undermined the staging and indeed authority of the Faslane protestors. The mass media thus offered another site for the

audience to engage with the Faslane performance and another version of the performance to consider, in addition to the live version and the remediations produced by the performers in the public sphere. This highlights the complexity of deliberation in the public sphere not only from the perspective of the performing actor but for the citizen-audience as well.

6.5.2 Performing protest online

Despite the lack of mass media interest for the duration of the year, the Faslane protestors generated a mediatised audience in another way. Like the SNP performers and SNPtv, they created a separate performance world and reality online. This relayed their preferred narrative of the campaign in the best possible light and uploaded their own protestor-generated mediatised performances on two main platforms; the Faslane 365 website and the YouTube website.

Performing online provided a platform for both deliberation and organization that was not limited by the spatial proximity of performers and audiences. The organization of Faslane 365 was achieved primarily online using the Faslane 365 website and the result was the coming together of different protest groups from geographically disparate areas, including France, Germany and Japan. This type of 'cyberprotest' is part of a wider phenomenon of 'scale shift' in protest organization. The non-territorially defined identity created by groups online enables links between previously disparate groups to develop and similarity to be attributed (Bennett in Donk, 2004). Faslane 365 would appear to be a textbook example of this phenomenon and the result was, as I suggested earlier, a

situation where the links between groups were “strong on lifestyle but ideologically thin” (Bennett in Donk, 2004: 129). This also marks this type of online performance as quite different from SNPtv where the purpose was to generate a sense of civic national identity. The Faslane protestors were appealing to a transnational oppositional identity rather than representing citizens as primarily members of a state. This encouraged a form of international deliberation freed from the territorial constraints of the state.

Coming back to the embodiment of resistance, the phenomenological experience of performing protest online involved using the performing body in a different way because the internet, it has been argued, is a disembodiment experience (Robins, 1996). Online, the Faslane performers had the ability to create their own identity regardless of the physical characteristics of age, gender and race. In theory this was empowering because the inequalities that are associated with the embodied, bio-social identity were no longer relevant. This equalising quality thus changed the relationships that performers could have with other performers and with the audience. At the same time, however, I would argue rather that the mediated performance online merely changed the audience experiential reception of the performance. The issues of threat and sacrifice that I discussed in considering the live performance were rendered less potent as both the audience and performer were removed from many of the physical sensations. They were, as Robins has suggested, reduced mostly to one sense only and that was the visual (Robins, 1996: 30).

It is important to note that the relationship between the live performance and this mediated one was relational. Coming back to Bolter and Grusin's concept of remediation, hypermediacy and immediacy were two themes that resonated clearly in the Faslane 365 website. The flexibility of the website format (limited only by the creative and technical expertise of the group's web designer) allowed Faslane 365 to create another performance world 'from scratch' (Robins, 1996: 38) that was not confined by the same rules and regulations as the Faslane performance space. As such, this dislocation meant that the protestors could add much more information about their performances, in particular an elaboration of their aims and anti-nuclear arguments, either directly to the website or by hyperlinking to other sites (Figure 6.7). The characters of the different protest groups, for example, could similarly be developed in greater depth by hyperlinking their individual websites to the Faslane site. In this way, the performance was hypermediated to create a more detailed performance world that complemented and expanded upon the live event with the process of hyperlinking giving an infinite amount of detail. The website thus provided a platform for deliberation not just for non-protesting members of the audience who could provide comments but for the other protestors. It allowed groups from, for example, Germany, to find out more information about their partner protestors in the UK and discuss the issue of nuclear disarmament with them online before meeting them at the live performance at Faslane.

However, the website also generated a sense of immediacy to the live event. The constantly updated photos and videos allowed the

audience to catch up with the progress of the movement and the highly visible counters on the main page of numbers of arrests, blockading groups and 'days to go' gave the Faslane 365 performance as a whole a sense of unity and continuity across the year. At the same time as getting this feeling of immediacy, the audience could also take a retrospective look at the back-catalogue of blogs and performer-generated content from any performance in which they were interested. The audience to the mediated performance was thus more active and in control of how they received the performance. Not only did they actively chose where and when to visit the digital proscenium of the website, but they did not have to view it sequentially as the live audience had to. The result was that the audience could author their own narrative of Faslane 365 and tailor an individual performance for themselves. This contrasted with the sequential daily news format of SNPtv.

Of course, that is not to say that the performers relinquished control of the plot altogether. The audience could only work within the parameters set by the performers; the Faslane 365 organisers chose what was uploaded onto the website and the performers chose how they generated the content. For example, the performers at the Stop the War Coalition blockade that I attended did not take any photos (that I saw) and none were uploaded onto the website. As a result, that particular performance hardly exists in the online version of Faslane 365 and this was an active choice on the part of the protestors – it was neither successful nor interesting enough to be representative of the movement.

Another interesting feature about the Faslane 365 website was the

use not only of photos and blogs but of user-generated videos. These gave a sense of immediacy as the mobile images reflected the live experience in a way that the static photos did not, whilst at the same time offering a more intimate viewpoint that was not possible for an audience member of the live performance. One Big Blockade video, for example, offered a 'performers'-eye view' of the moments before the performers set up their road blockade in the early hours of the morning. The mobile images and sound captured the excitement of the protestors and their perceptions of police reaction (Kraeme, 2007).

In addition to this sense of immediacy, many of the videos were hypermediatised, using production techniques such as title sequences, credits, soundtracks, montage and cut-screens of protest text. Using music and montage made the performance more symbolically and emotionally resonant and the montages compressed the narrative into its most interesting form. But this hypermediatisation also highlighted a semi-professionalism in the performers' approach to distributing their mediatised versions of the live performance. It made the performer-generated content reminiscent of more conventional forms of politics such as the SNP party election broadcasts discussed in the last chapter. This left the performers open to similar criticisms of offering an obviously contrived performance to the audience rather than focusing on the discourse of the authentic, embodied 'real' live event. However, one might argue that hypermediatising their amateur videos was an ironic, subversive gesture and made a mockery of the contrived nature of the party political machine. Nonetheless the availability of

this technology and similarity in the end result implied a correction in the imbalance of resources held between conventional and non-conventional political actors.

It would be easy to adopt a techno-utopian view with regard to this online performance and how it affected the deliberative potential of the performers. It is true that performing online gave the performers the prospect of digital deliberation free from the disempowering constraints of the embodied protestor and indeed the online performance ensured that there was more participation and deliberation across previously separated groups. However, in addition to the critique of the quality of this deliberation as ideologically thin, it is also an overly optimistic position. As I argued earlier, both the Stop the War Coalition blockade and the Big Blockade showed that despite being organised online, the live performance still reflected power inequalities and divisions across the bio-social lines of gender, age and class and some individuals' voices were louder than others. Moreover, the issue of access to this online public sphere was pertinent as it required the economic measure of having access to an online computer. Users (whether audience or performer) had to satisfy other class-based inclusionary criteria such as English reading skills, internet browsing skills and, for some performances, ability to upload material and write blogs. In this way, this case highlights the multiple sites for deliberation in the contemporary public sphere and the relational connections between the live and the mediated in this context.

6.5.3 Distributing the performance.

In addition to the Faslane 365 website as a platform, the protestors also distributed the mediatised performance through different outlets. As I have suggested, the Faslane 365 performers made a concerted effort to engage the national and local media in covering their performance as an event. This was achieved by lobbying journalists by telephone, generating frequent press releases and making sure that different actors were available for interview. Furthermore, the mediatised performance of the website boasted a 'press pack' that gave media-friendly but pro-Faslane 365 synopses of the plot thus far and detailed the cast list (highlighting the celebrities that offered their support). This was complemented by a different page that listed all the Faslane 365-related features in the local and national media (that now acts as a retrospective plot of Faslane 365).

To some extent the Faslane performers were successful in that the movement received attention across most Scottish outlets at some point throughout the campaign. However, the coverage was generally a result of either a high-profile arrest of one of the celebrity-protestors or the Peninsula 24/7 phenomenon. As a result the Stop the War Coalition performance, having only three inactive protestors and being too early in the movement for protests by local people, did not receive any coverage at all. The Big Blockade, on the other hand, was not only the conclusion of the yearlong protests (and thus a natural time for the media to provide a summary of the movement) but also generated the highest turnout and longest

blockade of the base. Furthermore, the Faslane 365 organisers created a separate 'F365 Big Blockade' page that created an element of hype for the event and a script that, as I mentioned earlier, was followed faithfully in the live performance.

The Faslane performers also distributed the mediatised performance more independently by posting photos and videos on file-sharing websites such as YouTube (and to a lesser extent Indymedia). For example, a clip of the police chasing and eventually arresting the Faslane Squirrel accompanied to comedy music was particularly popular on YouTube for example (alanpancetta, 2007). By using online outlets the Faslane performers bypassed the institutions of news media that have traditionally made it difficult for non-conventional political actors to gain access to the public sphere. In addition, these particular outlets are associated with youth culture, anarchy and immediacy making them symbolically relevant sites for the political performance. More interestingly, these websites (particularly YouTube) are consistently being updated with more user-generated content allowing the story of Faslane 365 to be retold from the perspective of any number of performers.

These performances on Youtube and Indymedia allowed audience members to add their feedback and comments immediately upon viewing the video. The result was a more communicative, interactive form of digital deliberation as regards the relationship between performer and audience member than in the real-time of the live performance. Moreover, the audience's ability to hyperlink to other related performances or indeed to upload a performance of their own meant that the transition from audience to performer was

easier. These comments also provided another, retrospective script for the performance that was negotiated by engagement between different performers and between audience and performance.

Looking at the mediatised performance of Faslane 365 has shown that the relationship between the live and the mediatised performance was interactive. The protestors at the live event were aware of the importance of the future, mediatised performance and engaged in its construction by generating videos and photos during the event. As with the conventional political performances in Parliament and in the election campaign, the actors were aware that their performance had to be both enacted and recorded (Robins, 1996). On this understanding the 'live' performance was no less or more contrived than the mediatised. In fact both performances were self-referential and remediated one another. However, the mediatisation provided a site for a form of digital deliberation that not only allowed the audience to have a highly interactive role but also had transnational appeal. This meant that deliberation could not just happen at the national level but the global and local one as well. In this way the performance offered much more varied and textured form of political representation to the citizen online, one that they could help to author themselves.

6.6 Conclusion: Performing Protest: Location, embodiment and visibility

In conclusion, the performance of Faslane 365 has highlighted the importance of location and embodiment in the practice of deliberation. First, as we have seen throughout this thesis, the location of the performance was symbolically resonant on many levels. However the Faslane performers' use of space was not authoritative and uncontested as we have seen in the previous two cases. This reflected a wider lack of control that these unconventional performers had as regards the staging of the performance. The competition for control of the space in turn led to a wider cast of actors involved in the performance world, each with conflicting accounts of the narrative. Where conventional politicians like Blair, Brown and Salmond used performance spaces to add an authority and authenticity to their performances as national representatives, the Faslane performers used their situation outside the nuclear base as a symbol of their transgressive aims. They disrupted the use of the space with their bodies as sites of resistance in order to insert themselves into the public sphere, something that is echoed in the terrorist case in the next chapter.

Thus, the representative goals of these performers were different to the conventional performers explored in chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis. This case has shown that these unconventional performers reflexively represented their own dissent in the public sphere rather than through the conventional political channels. This form of representation was not necessarily linked to national territory as the

transnational nature of the Faslane website and Big Blockade demonstrated. Moreover, it was not confined by ritual and convention. In the Carnival of Resistance the performers used a wider range of ironic techniques, at times adopting an absurdist approach to the political.

This offered a very different form of deliberation in the public sphere that was also entertaining. Indeed, by allowing them to engage in the process of deliberation rather than just the bargaining position of engaging in the blockade, performance techniques offered these unconventional political actors a sort of conventionality in their representative role in the public sphere. They also showcased a form of embodied deliberation by using the performance of their discomfort, sacrifice and loss of personal liberty as representations of their resistance. In this way, they bypassed the importance of long-winded, rational arguments or even spoken characterisation and communicated with their audience on an embodied, phenomenological level.

As with conventional representatives, presence was important for this case and the performing bodies of the protestors were highly accessible to the participating audience. This promoted a more interactive and egalitarian relationship because the audience members could conceivably share the same space as the protestors. Moreover, their presence meant that the audiences could also more clearly appreciate their embodied deliberation. However, their presence did not offset the protestors' lack of an officially representative role linked to an electoral mandate and state power. As such their presence was also limiting for the Faslane protestors'

performances because rather than the freedom of their bodies being protected the intermediary actors of the police, they were physically restrained.

The protestors' lack of an official representative role was also reinforced in the muted response of the mainstream mass media to their performance. To increase visibility in the public sphere, the protestors performed actions of civil disobedience such as the blockade or the graffiti. However, to some extent these actions undermined their deliberative aims. I argued that, in particular, the parts of the performance that generated an involuntary audience indicated a less equal interaction between the protestors and the local audience. This was highlighted by involvement of local protestors in Peninsula 24/7. These alternative protestors not only undermined the credibility of the oppositional identity created by the Faslane 365 protestors but raised questions about the legitimacy of their representative claims. As many of the Faslane performers had travelled to the location of Faslane for the protest, sometimes from other countries, they were set in opposition to the local community suggesting the importance of national and local identity in convincing political representation. In this case there was thus a tension between the method of gaining visibility in the public sphere and the ability to generate a deliberative context.

But the performance did successfully generate a deliberative context, despite this tension in gaining visibility. Compared with the SNP and Blair/Brown performances, this performance offered more opportunities for audience interaction and the ability for an audience member to be an active spect-actor. This manifested itself in the

accessibility of the live performance location and also the inclusive approach of the Faslane 365 agenda more generally. The idea of interactivity was also resonant in the mediated performances, which were generated by many different performers and uploaded online on both the website and open video-sharing sites like Youtube. This online format allowed the audience the freedom to explore the performance in their own space and time and also to add comments, arrange meetings and disregard the performance altogether. This form of political representation, because it was concerned with representing dissent of ordinary citizens, was highly participatory and represents a bottom-up practice of deliberation in both the live and digital contexts. As I explore in the next chapter, the terrorist attack performance also represented the dissent of ordinary citizens however participation in this performance was, for many, involuntary.

Chapter 7:

Performing Terror: Sacrifice, Spectacle and Hijacking the Public Sphere in the case of the 7/7 London Bombings

In this final case study I use the metaphor of politics-as-performance to explore one of the most unconventional and destructive forms of political information; the use of terrorism and, specifically, the terrorist attack as way of inserting a political actor into the public sphere. Terrorist attacks, it has been argued, are “primarily theatre”; not only are they grotesque spectacles that captivate an audience’s imagination but in many cases they are scripted far more for the public performance that is seen by the potential audience than for the potential victims (Wardlaw, 1989: 38). Thus, in considering the design, scripting and execution of the terrorist attack we find the metaphor of politics-as-performance taking on a more subversive form. Unlike the previous cases I have explored, this performance is intended to skew and disrupt democratic deliberation.

In some ways the terrorist attack is a natural continuation from the discussion of the Faslane case in the previous chapter, not least because terrorism is a further step in the “cycle of protest” (Della Porta and Tarrow, 1986). Terrorism might be considered a form of protest because in its simplest terms it is concerned with how citizens represent their dissent in the public sphere and as such it forms part of the plethora of representations that make up political ‘reality’. The

performance of terror shows up similarities to protest in terms of using theatrics to gain visibility in the public sphere, lacking a coherent, ideologically robust message and an unauthorised use of performance space. There are also organisational similarities between protests and terrorist attacks in that they are both performed by non-conventional, non-state actors and thus can suffer from similar deficiencies of funds, expertise, access to media and legitimacy discussed in the previous chapter.

There are, however, two key differences that make the terrorist attack a potent case to explore in its own right. The performance of death, damage and sacrifice, to the terrorists' bodies, the audience and surrounding space, is the central focus of the event. The extremity and finality of such an action leads to a very different conception of the performer-audience relationship and acutely focuses attention on the legitimacy of using such macabre performance techniques. It also makes the performance both aesthetically and politically distinct from the peaceful protest because its overall aim is not to persuade the audience (to win their 'hearts and minds' in a fair, competitive public sphere) but is, as the name suggests, to generate terror. The desire to prompt such an extreme, almost visceral reaction of fear from the audience makes the terrorist-performer unique in the political sphere.

This leads on to the second point which is that in some ways terrorism is, as Alexander notes, "postpolitical" (Alexander, 2004: 88-89) in that it is not concerned with the solution of problems through deliberation but through the threat (and indeed execution) of violence. Whilst the Faslane performers used acts of civil

disobedience as a means to insert themselves into the public sphere, they remained committed to a deliberative democratic solution through opening 'dialogue' (Faslane365, 2006b). As I argue in this chapter, the aims of the terrorist performers are less transparent but the finality of performing acts of physical destruction suggests that a deliberative solution is not possible. As such, the terrorist attack in many ways reflects the "end of political possibility" and, specifically, signals the end of deliberation and the beginning of bargaining with the state using the bodies of citizens as leverage (Alexander, 2004: 88-89).

7.01 Case study: 7 July 2005 Bombings, London

The discussion of terrorism above is necessarily generalised and the political 'reality', of course, is more complex with the thousands of terrorist organisations across the world employing their own techniques, motivations and performance styles. This results in something of a definitional crisis of what constitutes a terrorist, a freedom fighter and state terror. Even taking the intuitive definition of terrorism I suggested above, that it is a process of generating fear in citizens in order to achieve a political objective, then acts as diverse as the 9/11 attack, Stalin's Show Trials and heritage of armed struggle by the African National Congress might all be considered candidates. As Crenshaw points out "identical acts performed under different situations do not fall under the same definition" (1983: 2). It is perhaps telling that the United Nations does not yet have a universally agreed definition of terrorism despite being prompted by

the 7/7 bombings to attempt to draft one centred on the “deliberate killing of civilians and non-combatants” (BBCNews, 2005d). It would seem that the very act of designating a group of political actors as ‘terrorist’ is political itself and in fact this reinforces the idea that there is no political reality, rather competing representations of political reality. From a performance perspective, thinking about terrorism highlights that it is a definition that differs depending on the perspective of the performer or the audience and indeed the nature of the interaction between them. With this in mind, for this chapter I narrow this discussion to exploring one performance from a non-state political actor involved in the generation of fear and deliberate harm that was designated in the British public sphere as an act of terrorism: the “July 7th” (or, 7/7) London Bombings in 2005.²⁸

The script for the 7/7 performance was emergent rather than publicly available beforehand (as we have seen in previous cases in this thesis). As a result the specifics of the action that unfolded were perceived as instantaneous and unexpected to all but the terrorist-performers. The lack of a script both before and directly after the event meant that the disruption and chaos that the performance generated was heightened. It also meant that the script was written retrospectively by the audience as it emerged in a flexible, occasionally unreliable and eventually fetishised form in the aftermath of the performance.

²⁸ Throughout I will refer to these political actors as terrorist-performers, however it is not without reflection on these definitional issues.

This lack of a script in the public sphere before the performance was enacted did not, however, mean that there was no script at all. We might consider the terrorists' plans and preparations as akin to a hidden manifesto that provided the structure for their future actions in the same way that the SNP's manifesto acted as a constant for the uncertainties of the lived campaign. Another set of hidden scripts available before the performance, to which the mass audience did not have access, could be termed "intelligence-based scripts." These included intelligence about potentially active terrorist suspects or cells in existence at that time and the plans or counter-performances that would be employed in the event of an attack.

The emergent narrative of the terrorist performance ran as follows. On 7 July 2005 four British citizens - Mohammad Sidique Khan, Hasib Hussain, Germaine Lindsay and Shehzad Tanweer - travelled from Luton to London and set off four suicide bombs concealed in their backpacks. Three were detonated simultaneously at approximately 8.50am whilst the terrorist-performers were travelling on trains in the London Underground system; between Aldgate and Liverpool Street stations, between King's Cross and Russell Sq and Edgware Road station slightly later. A final bomb exploded on an overland bus approximately one hour later at Tavistock Square. The resulting disruption effectively shut down most of central London as the Underground system came to a halt and emergency services worked to evacuate survivors and put out fires. Fifty two civilians died alongside the four terrorists, with reports of up to 770 injured and an estimated 3000 people suffering from post traumatic stress disorder (Muir, 2007). Approximately six

weeks later, a video of the actor who by that time was designated the presumed organiser of the bombings Mohammad Sidique Khan, was aired on Al Jazeera television where he outlined his jihadist motivations for the attack and in a separate clip on the same tape Ayman al-Zawahri (from terrorist organisation Al Qaeda) took credit and some responsibility for the attacks (however, a direct link was not proven). Finally, on 6 July 2006 (approximately a year after the attacks) another very similar video was shown on Al Jazeera featuring Shehzad Tanweer.

There are a number of features of this case that make it an interesting candidate for applying the metaphor of politics-as-performance. First, the motivations of both Al Qaeda and Mohammad Sidique Khan are presented in the martyrdom video as religious and, as such, their performances can be analysed as religious acts within the framework of rituals. This provides an interesting point of comparison to the secular performances I have explored thus far in this thesis, especially the state-reinforcing secular rituals of the Blair/Brown case. I analyse the representation of the political actors' religious beliefs and how this interacted with their political objectives.

Secondly, the link with Al Qaeda couples this performance with what Stockhausen described as "the greatest work of art there has ever been", the 9/11 attacks on the world trade centre in New York 2001 (Bell, 2003: 7). This hauntingly iconic and, as Simpson puts it, "horribly sublime" (2003: 235) performance acted as a precedent and had a decisive effect on the design and script of the 7/7 performance.

I explore the benefits of this comparison as well as the impact of the UK's national history of IRA terrorism in this case.

Thirdly, and linked to this, the role of nationalism and conceptions of 'Britishness' permeate this case. The fact that the terrorists were 'home grown' and attacked the capital city highlights the competing performances and counter-performances of British national identity both during the event and in the aftermath. It also provides a comparison with the top-down politically elite conception of national identity provided in the Blair/Brown case and the more inclusive, deliberative devolved national identity in the SNP case. Moreover, this terrorist performance was a public expression of the political objectives and preferences of a group of UK citizens and as such was a form of political representation, albeit the most destructive one that I explore in this thesis.²⁹

²⁹ Germaine Lindsay, as I explore later in this chapter, was not technically a UK citizen but had lived in the UK since childhood.

7.1 Scarring the nation; transforming the cityscape

Wardlaw points out that as the terrorist-performer plans an attack they “consciously script live-action spectacles” and they are often able to do so by virtue of the freedoms of speech and information that are characteristic of a democratic society like the UK (Wardlaw, 1989: 49). The ‘live-action spectacular’ is a useful phrase because it highlights the compelling quality of a successful terrorist performance in that it literally demands spectators. The ability to attract attention in the public sphere through their performance is essential because without an audience the terrorist-performer cannot publicly represent their dissent or engage in any sort of bargaining process through the use of terror.

Specific details like the identity and exact numbers of victims are unknowns for the terrorist-performers beyond estimations because these are only finalised during the performance itself. The process of scripting the spectacular thus relies on a small number of variables under the performers’ control: choosing their own actions (for example, suicide or hostage-taking), choosing props (for example, bombs or hijacked airplanes) and choosing the performance space and time. It is important that the terrorist-performer chooses the performance space for maximum symbolic effect. The compelling nature of terrorist performances can be attributed in part to their transformation of unexpected civilian settings through attacks on either human bodies or material objects, or both (Horowitz in Crenshaw, 1983; Gearty, 1991). After the attack is carried out the performance space is suddenly the focal point for the audience as

they watch the drama of the live event unfolding in that space. In the case of the 7/7 bombings the performance space of central London not only generated a spectacle that demanded an audience it also symbolised an attack on the nation itself.

7.1.1 London as a stage

The performance was spread over four locations in central London (Figure 7.1) which were major commuter routes on the public transport system.

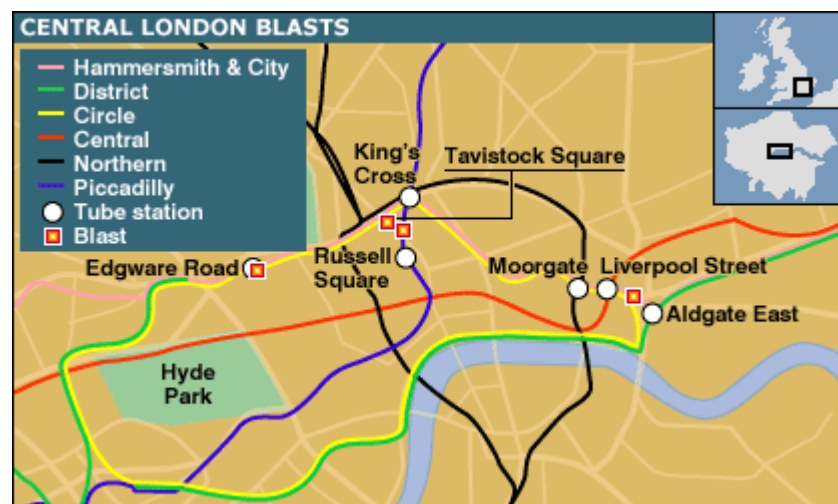


Figure 7.1 Map of London showing four explosions. Image: BBC website

The map above shows the locations of the attacks. It is also an example of how the use of maps to show the spatial locations of the explosions was a key part of the media commentary on the performance more generally, with most of the major newspapers featuring a map, often illustrated with the timings of the bombs and the numbers known to be dead at those locations. This was an attempt to impose a retrospective order on the performance which, in real time, was disorientating and unexpected. Like the SNP case

there was a mixture of structure and chaos with the terrorists imposing the chaos in a number of locations over the course of 56 minutes and the audience retrospectively trying to make sense of it.

Staging the 7/7 performance in a densely populated city centre ensured that the event could not be ignored because of the disruption and transformation of the space for so many people. The 7/7 bombings were successful in gaining widespread attention in the first few hours in part because many thousands of people could not use the space as normal. The Underground was closed, motorway signs bore the surprising message 'Avoid London: Area Closed' and the subsequent emergency services counter-performance shut down the roads and thoroughfares of the city centre. This immediate and extreme disruption of the potential audience's use of space contrasts with the protestors' failure to do so at the unsuccessful Stop the War protest.

However, staging an event in the city centre also meant that it was relational to other spectacles and indeed other acts of violence that are a day to day aspect of the London timetable. In particular, the 7/7 performance was in competition with the previous day's celebrations, when London was chosen as the host city for the 2012 Olympic Games. The images of the celebrations in Leicester Square were in fact displayed on the front page of most national newspapers on 7 July. The terrorist performance had to be so spectacular that it would clearly overshadow this event in order to get the attention its performers required.

Another point about staging the event in a city centre was that the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the performance (as either an audience member or a victim) were broad and hard to define. In many ways, staging it in a city suggested that there was a randomness about who the terrorist performance would involve – tourists, locals and commuters alike were all affected in the same way, as were the predominantly Muslim neighbourhoods near King's Cross. This randomness contributed to the generation of terror because it was so unexpected and because it highlighted the lack of definite inclusion criteria outside that of being unlucky enough to be on those trains or that bus. This suggested that there would have been no way to avoid being a victim and further accentuated the lack of control that the audience had in this performance.

This performance space thus made a symbolic point about the intended audience of the performance through the inclusion of these victims. Compared with the more focused primary targets of the disruption of the Faslane performance (namely the nuclear base workers), the location of central London in an area full of commuters suggested that the terrorist performance was less targeted at the individuals who lived in that space and more at the nation itself.

This leads on to the fact that this particular performance was not staged in just any UK city. The terrorist-performers travelled from Luton (and originally from their home towns of Leeds, Aylesbury and Dewsbury) specifically to stage the performance in the UK's capital city. Like the Blair/Brown case that gained authority by performing in this centre of political power and focal point of

national identity, so too this location made the terrorist performance resonate on a national level. The successful attack on London was also an attack on the imagined community of Britain. Figure 7.1 highlights this point with the graphic in the top right corner situating the performance within the context of the London area and also the wider perspective of the UK. The audience's familiarity with the performance space made the terrorist attack more intimate and in some ways made its destruction more profound.

In addition to the symbolic value of this location, setting the performance in London made the attack seem more dangerous by physical proximity to major institutions. In addition to the general economic importance of London as a commercial hub, the city also houses the centres of business (The City) and politics (Houses of Parliament, Buckingham Palace). Perhaps more importantly, London is also the media centre of the UK with most major newspapers and television channels having offices there. Journalists were not just reporters of the event but participants in the performance. Setting the performance in central London thus involved a high level of audience participation because it affected many areas of the public sphere including the key institutions of business, politics and the media. As such, the performance was more visible and generated a sense of scale and spectacle by using this familiar and symbolic cityscape as a stage. Where in the Blair/Brown case the performance represented an authoritative elite version of Britishness, the terrorist performance was a subversive representation that destabilised this authority and the strength of these capital institutions.

Secondly, and perhaps linked to this, London has a heritage of attacks such as the IRA attacks, the homophobic nail-bomb attack on the Admiral Duncan pub in Soho (1999) and, of course, the Blitz. On the one hand, this heritage of terrorist performances in the location increased the impact of the 7/7 performance because the residents of London had to relive the horror of previous attacks. It also added to perceptions of the city as an insecure place to be and live. On the other, it lessened the impact of the attack because it had been done before. Unlike, for example, 9/11 which set a precedent but did not have much to live up to, this performance was in competition with previous performances of a similar type in this location.

Finally, London is an easily-recognisable setting not only to the UK audience but also to the rest of the world. The city's international reputation provided a platform of understanding for an international audience and thus helped to make the spectacular force of the performance more globally significant. This was especially true given London's international role as Olympic host. It also facilitated a more natural connection with New York and the 9/11 performance and provided the context of the global 'war on terror' for this performance. The location of London thus provided a stage for these non-state political actors that they lacked without a formal role in conventional politics and allowed them to represent their opposition to a global audience.

7.1.2 Hidden destruction: The Tunnel of Fear

Examining the staging of the 7/7 performance more closely highlights a more subtle connection to the 9/11 performance. Most of the actual material carnage of the performance was hidden as three of the bombs went off underground. This provided an interesting mirroring of the high-altitude, visible 9/11 attacks and provoked a different kind of audience reaction. The underground performance space meant that the only live audience able to witness the explosions were the victims who were sharing the same space as the terrorist-performers. Unlike 9/11, where the burning and subsequent collapse of the twin towers could be seen from across the city, the most extreme transformations of space were hidden from view not just because they were underground but because they were shrouded in black smoke from the explosion. Survival stories from victim-performers are littered with references to the terrifying darkness (Figure 7.2). Vision was thus not the primary sense through which they experienced and reported the performance. Instead they focused on the acrid smell, the sound of clanking metal and screaming or the taste of blood (BBCNews, 2005a; Bowcott, 2005).



Figure 7.2 Picture of tunnels near Kings Cross taken by survivor. *Photo: BBC website*

Staging the main performance underground is reminiscent of the theatrical practice of leaving the more extreme acts of violence to be performed audibly off-stage. In some ways leaving some aspects of the performance up to the horrors of the audience's visual imagination can make it more poignant, disturbing and frightening.

The destruction underground was reflected eventually in the chaos overground as the survivors spilled out into the streets and the emergency response was enacted. The performance space was thus transformed not only by the destruction of the bombs but also by the bodies of the survivors and the work of the emergency services. An interesting side effect of this was that after the initial few hours of panic, the streets of central London that in normal circumstances are never empty (even in the middle of the night) were eerily quiet as a result of the lockdown of the city that the emergency response enacted. The aerial pictures taken from the helicopter-bound media allowed the mediated audience to reflect on the juxtaposition

between the uncharacteristically calm streets and the imagined destruction and death underground. In this way absence was a form of performance.

We might also consider the London Underground as a performance space. It is a common tactic of terrorists to attack a place of leisure, travel or tranquillity such as the airport, a bar full of tourists or in this case the Underground (Gearty, 1991: 8). These are places that almost everyone uses in one way or another and so to attack them is to attack a part of daily life. This increases the fear factor as suddenly the routine is no longer safe.

Of course, there was one aspect of the performance that was enacted overground in full view – the bus explosion in Tavistock Square, close to the very busy King's Cross Station. The explosion tore the top off a double-decker London bus and this wreckage (as the bus was left in full view as the security forces gathered evidence) became an iconic image of the performance. It also contrasted with the affluent-looking square that was home to the British Medical Association building, with blood from the explosion being splattered on the building itself. It was highly symbolic that the death and violence occurred outside a building full of doctors.

7.1.3 Timing and Staging

Closely related to the issue of staging the performance in a particular space, was the issue of staging it at a particular time. The timing of

the bombings, which started at 8.50am on a Thursday morning, ensured that the victims were likely to be commuters en route to work. By targeting commuters, the terrorist-performers ensured that their victims-as-props would be fairly young and active members of society. This made their deaths even more poignant as losses on both a personal and a national scale. It also ensured that there would be an audience watching events unfold throughout the day.

Timing was also relevant as regards the beginning and ending of the performance. The script emerged over time after the explosions and so the details of the performance developed in the days, weeks and even years that followed as the post-mortem and subsequent inquiries were undertaken. In this way, gradually, the spatial movements of the terrorists in the hours, days, weeks and months preceding the performance become public knowledge and the subject of continuous, ongoing debate. This long-winded, detailed analysis after the event contrasted sharply with the relative brevity of the terrorist attack as a live performance – it is perhaps the shortest performance that I examine in this thesis as each ‘scene’ lasted a few seconds or, put together, 56 minutes start to finish. However, this brevity of performance added to its intensity as the event could be analysed in minute detail by the media unlike, say, the year-long Faslane 365 protests. This intensity of action within a short time frame also made the performance more newsworthy by providing a dramatic event in the public sphere.

The date of 7 July 2005 was also significant. Staging the performance during the summer had an effect on the type of people likely to be victims and members of the live audience because

London is a popular tourist destination. Linked to this, the juxtaposition of the jubilant celebrations after the Olympic contract win with the live action of the suffering and death heightened the shocking emotional effect of the terrorist performance. It also prompted a longer term anxiety about a repeat performance for the Olympic games in 2012.

The 7/7 performance coincided with the spectacle that the meeting of the G8 in Gleneagles provided, but the level of destruction meant that the terror performance made the bigger impact in the public sphere. In fact, the destruction and suffering of ordinary citizens in the humble location of the London underground contrasted powerfully with the opulent surroundings of the luxury hotel in Scotland where the elite and protected world leaders were meeting. It emphasised that, for the terrorist performers, it was the civilians who had to pay for the perceived mistakes of their government.

Lastly, the date of 7 July 2005 was intrinsically changed by the performance as it now takes on a new, symbolic meaning in the public sphere. Whilst it does not have neat association with the 'emergency call' number of '911', 7/7 is nonetheless now carved in the national psyche as a day of remembrance for the victims. Every year on this date, the performance is relived as the memories of the survivors are retold and the images of the carnage re-broadcast.

In looking at the performance space of the terrorist performance, I argue that the transformations of space that this performance enacted were more damaging and permanent than the others considered in

this thesis. By damaging buses, trains and the tunnel infrastructure of the city, these transformations acted as visible metaphorical scars on the city that contributed to the performance being nationally remembered long after the live event of the performance. The material destruction that was enacted by the performance was of course not its most shocking feature. It was the scars on the bodies of the victims and the survivors that provided the lasting emotional impact of the 7/7 performance.

7.2 “Atrocity Exhibition”³⁰: Performing Death and Violence

In his martyrdom video the lead terrorist-performer Mohammad Sidique Khan generated a representation of his political views in the public sphere by performing a speech to camera, which was later remediated by Al Jazeera television after the terrorist performance in question. Whilst this speech contained an explanation of his political beliefs and the reasons for his actions, one phrase stood out that is particularly relevant to the metaphor of politics-as-performance. He said, “our words are dead until we give them life with our blood” (Khan, 2005). This chilling sentiment encapsulated the importance of the public performance of death and violence to the representation of Mohammad Sidique Khan’s political preferences. It also offered a particular understanding of the deliberative relationship he envisaged with the public sphere. He implied that words alone, without actions, were not enough to represent him and his political position. In this way, he marked the end of the process of deliberation altogether and offered a different interaction with the political based on performance of death and violence to make his dialogue meaningful.

As Appadurai has noted, in terrorist attacks the body is both the site and the source of violence and human bodies are sacrificed in an almost ritualistic way (Appadurai, 1998: 231). In the 7/7 performance

³⁰ Taken from the title of J. G Ballard’s experimental novel which explores the relationship between the mass media and the individual’s experience of the world and the blurred distinction between reality and representation. (Ballard and Burroughs, 1990)

it was the shock of the public performance of these deaths coupled with the wilful sacrifice of the terrorists' own performing bodies that gave the terrorist performance its power and intensity, making it one of the most dramatic events in the public sphere. The terrorist performance was thus compelling because it was a theatre of cruelty, terrible to watch but impossible to ignore.

7.2.1 Politics, morality and sacrifice

Before moving on to look at the case in greater detail, it is worth pausing to consider the role of morality and sacrifice in the cases thus far. In Blair and Brown's speeches they both used their religious backgrounds (Catholicism for Blair and Presbyterianism for Brown) as part of the representation of their identities in the public sphere. They both implied that their religious contexts had an effect on the decisions they made and indeed Brown's conference speech featured a set of policies based on moral principles of equality and fairness. The SNP case employed a similarly more secular notion of morality that was manifested in the idea of a self-determining Scottish nation outside of English control and a Big Tent nationalism that was fair and inclusive. Finally, the Faslane performers used absurdist performance techniques to question the morality of the nuclear base and nuclear war and featured members of the clergy as protestors. Although they employed the idea of religious or secular morality in different ways, in their representation of themselves in the public sphere these three sets of actors shared the desire to use their

morality as part of a positive representation of themselves in the public sphere.

All three sets of actors' performances also expressed the ideas of sacrifice and loss to achieve a political goal. Brown's conference speech directly referred to the 7/7 performance and the loss of life in the context of the response to terror in a free society, Blair's resignation speech discussed the war in Iraq and his feeling of responsibility to the families, but also the difficulties of being a leader and the problems with being required to provide 'the answer'. The SNP's travelling show implied a sacrifice on the part of the SNP performers who were far away from their families but a commitment to their representative role for the Scottish citizens and national self-determination. Finally the Faslane performers sacrificed the freedom of their bodies by locking on and blockading in order to achieve the long term goal of nuclear disarmament. The idea of giving up something physically to gain a political goal thus resonated in each performance.

In the 7/7 case, however, these themes of morality, sacrifice and achieving a political goal took centre stage in the performance, in a large part because the sacrifice in question was permanent and final. By performing not only their own deaths but those of their victims, the 7/7 performers took the idea of sacrifice to its limit. Sacrifice was a necessity in order to achieve the performers' twin goals of being taken seriously and of retaliation against the attacks on "[their] people" by the audience's "democratically elected governments" (Khan, 2005). The political actors' use of morality in this case, then, was not to generate a positive representation of themselves in the UK

public sphere but to legitimise their actions and their reasons for not following the normal deliberative procedures. As Khan went on to say, “our religion is Islam...this is how our ethical stances are dictated” (Khan, 2005). Thus in his martyrdom video performance and in his 7/7 performance, this political actor offered an alternative representation of political morality. His performance was not the sacrifice of ‘innocent’ civilians but a counter-performance of retaliation in the context of a religious war (in which he was “a soldier”). Khan referred to the performance as “work” that he prayed would be accepted by Allah and a sacrifice that would allow him and his fellow performers entry into the “gardens of paradise” (Khan, 2005). In this case, then, religion was used in a subversive way to undermine the state. Rather than seeing their religion as an influence on their political beliefs and goals, these performers perceived it as replacing the political altogether.

7.2.2 The death of ‘innocents’: the role of victims-as-props

Alexander argues that terrorism makes “use of its victims’ vital fluids to throw a striking and awful painting on the canvass of social life. It aims...to gesture in a dramatic way” (2004: 90). This sentiment was reflected in a haunting cartoon in the newspapers that linked performance space, performance of death and violence and the city of London (Figure 7.3). Reminiscent of Enoch Powell’s infamous ‘Rivers of Blood’ speech in 1968, it featured a map of London with the Thames as a river of blood and splatters of blood over the explosion centres. At the time this cartoon was published (8 July 2005) the identity of the terrorists and their status as British

citizens was not known. The cartoon thus reflected assumptions that members of a threatening 'immigrant' population had attacked the nation.

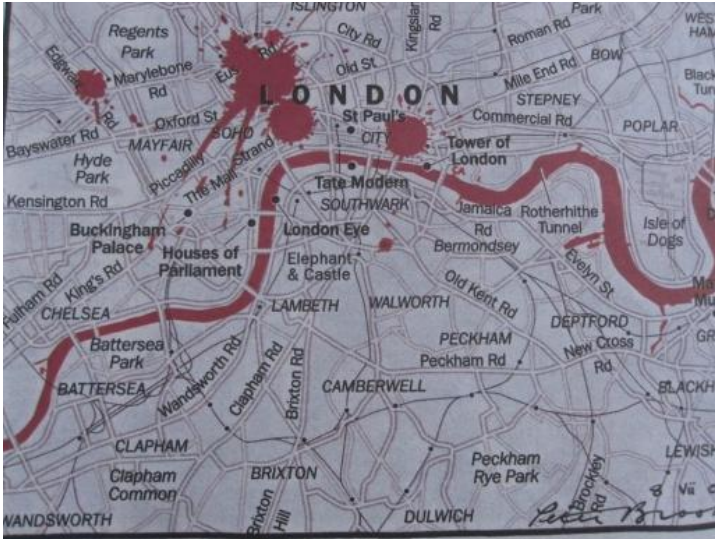


Figure 7.3 Cartoon in *The Times* showing map of London and a river of blood. Image: *The Times newspaper*

The 7/7 performance generated a sort of 'gothic horror' by using the victims' bodies as props. These victims were unwilling and unknowing participants in the spectacle because, as I suggested above, the terrorists' choice of performance space ensured that the criteria for inclusion in the event was fairly random. This meant that the victims were anonymous – just members of the potential audience - until the beginning of the performance and this is partly why the terrorist performance gained so much attention. The members of the audience who survived the attack was left with a strong sensation that 'it could have been me'.

Reflecting on Khan's martyrdom video we might infer that it was the terrorist performers' intention that the audience make this

representative link between themselves and the victims. The visibly violent and gruesome deaths of the victims were a sacrifice, with all the religious implications intended, and a punishment in the eyes of the terrorist-performers. In punishing these specific victims, the 7/7 performance symbolically punished the citizen audience and the nation. Of course, there was a tension between the terrorist performers' categorisation of the victims (as enemies in the war they were fighting) and that of the UK audience, most of whom would, presumably, categorise them as 'innocents' who individually were not responsible for the perceived crimes of the government. But Khan made the link between the victims and the audience directly. He said "your democratically elected governments continuously perpetrate atrocities against my people all over the world. And your support of them makes you directly responsible" (Khan, 2005). This shows that the relationship of political representation and responsibility can be interpreted in both directions. By this I mean that in addition to the elected representatives being responsible for the citizen by virtue of being empowered to take decisions that affect their lives, the citizen is also responsible for their elected representatives because they conferred that power on them in the first place. As such, for Khan, it was fair to punish the citizens for their representatives' actions. In this way, just as the elected representatives represented the citizen audience, the citizen audience represented and were made responsible for their elected representatives.

However, interestingly, in the quote above Khan says governments plural. He refers not only to the UK citizen audience

but the global one. Although this is an assumption he does not expand on in detail, one imagines he means the governments and citizens of secular/Christian capitalist nations in the West and specifically the US. This offers an interesting reimagining of political representation not as a nation-centred activity but as a global one. Political actors such as this 7/7 performer, or indeed the Faslane 365 organisation, appeal to this international audience in generating a representation of their political dissent.

The performing bodies of the victim-performers were thus used as props to represent not only the political dissent of the terrorists but their government and the citizens that elected it. By killing them in this way, the terrorist-performers objectified the performing bodies of the victims and used them as platforms to communicate symbolically to the audience. Here again, like the Faslane case, we can see the embodiment of political representation. In his video Khan made this point when he said, “our words have no impact on you, therefore I’m gonna talk to you in a language you understand” (Khan, 2005). Like the Faslane performers, this performance offered a different, embodied form of deliberation in a language of the suffering of the body, but this was more extreme, more permanent and without the agency of the participants.

The performance of death and violence, because of its visceral communication potential that is universal in its effect (in that everyone has a body and so everyone innately understands the idea of death and pain), gave the political actors a stage in the public sphere because the audience was compelled to watch the theatre of cruelty. Similarly, this is why it appealed to the ‘if it bleeds it leads’

criteria of newsworthiness. Like the Faslane case, these unconventional political actors did not have (or indeed want) an automatic stage denoted by an official representative role in elite politics. Nor did they have the monetary resources or heritage in the public sphere to create one. This dramatically embodied deliberation generated a platform upon which to insert themselves into the public sphere and represent their dissent. It also lent a political credibility to the terrorist-performers. Actually performing the death of citizens proved to the audience and most importantly to the government that the political views of the terrorist performers needed to be taken seriously.

Moving on to those who died, we might also consider the change in their roles in the public sphere after the performance. Before the event they were anonymous citizens with the details of their lives enacted privately but when they died they became posthumous celebrities. In the subsequent press coverage, for example, each individual victim's life was not only given dominance in the public sphere but reinterpreted in a symbolically resonant light. As with 9/11 the nature of their deaths turned these people into saints in the public consciousness (Alexander, 2004). Moreover, in addition to their lives being reinterpreted in the context of the spectacle, their names also became synonymous with the place they died. So, victims 'who were killed at Edgware Road' became grouped together in the public consciousness both through media reports of the performance and also by physical transformations of the space such as remembrance plaques.

One victim, for example, became a particularly memorable celebrity actor from this performance – ‘the girl called Islam’ Shahara Akther Islam (Gillan, 2005; Frith, 2005). Her story as a young Muslim woman who was both an active British citizen and a devout Muslim killed in the attacks symbolised the wider conflict. It raised questions about the degree of compatibility that was possible between Western values and a devout Muslim identity. In some ways her death and the stories told about her life acted as a counter-narrative to the terrorist performers, some of whom had similar backgrounds and who were unable to combine their religious identities and British democratic society. This leads on to the fact that in the 7/7 performance it was not just the victims’ bodies that suffered violence but the terrorist-performers as well.

7.2.3 Self-sacrifice

The four terrorist performers, by carrying the explosive devices on their bodies, linked themselves more closely to the action of their performance than, say, an IRA attack where the bombs were left alone to explode. In a sense, by carrying the explosions and being with the bombs when they went off the terrorist performers made this performance more personal. That this was not only a performance of the deaths of innocent people but also the suicide of the performers was a crucial part of their performance. It added an authenticity and legitimacy to their rationale for acting in the way that they did. It proved that, as Khan said in his martyrdom video, the terrorist performers were willing to make the ultimate sacrifice

for their political beliefs – “forsaking everything for what we believe” (Khan, 2005). If their words had failed to ignite political change thus far, their actions proved that their threats were not empty. They were tangible and enacted by people who no longer had anything material to lose because “[their] driving motivation doesn’t come from tangible commodities that this world has to offer” (Khan, 2005).

Again, in the public performance of their deaths, we see the theme of an embodied form of political representation that does not require words or even deliberation with the political actor. Khan made this point when he said that just as the victims were responsible for their government so too was he “directly responsible for protecting and avenging [his] Muslim brothers and sisters” (Khan, 2005), although, of course, this protection did not extend to the particular case of Shahara Akther Islam. The form that this responsibility took, for these terrorist-performers, was their suicide as a sacrifice to achieve that political goal. However, unlike the Faslane performers, the finality of dying meant that there was no opportunity to persuade the performers to change their minds, explain their performance to the audience or even be held accountable. Everything that the performers had to gain from this performance, in political terms, was for a future that they were no longer a part of. In sacrificing themselves for their beliefs they also avoided punishment for their actions by the state and thus controlled the performance on their own terms.

Moving on to consider the identities of the terrorist-performers, we might reflect that like the majority of the Faslane performers they

individually did not enjoy a high presence in the public sphere. Unlike the conventional actors explored in this thesis, these performers were not instantly recognisable and in fact this is what made the performance so successful. Initial analysis by the Home Office described them as 'clean skins' meaning that they had no previous history of links to terrorist organisations, although this has since been disproved as the plot emerged (Murphy, 2006; HouseOfCommons, 2006). However, they were not under surveillance at the time of the attacks. As such, as the terrorist-performers boarded the bus and trains they were not recognisable or distinct from other passengers. They just looked like normal citizens.

In some ways then there was a sort of intimacy between the terrorist-performer and victim-performer. Before the performance, on the outside, they were all just citizens acting in an everyday manner but the explosions which marked the start of the performance ruptured this both physically and metaphorically. As the explosions occurred suddenly there was a gulf between who was a terrorist-performer and who was a victim, which was symbolically representative of the rupture between Western secularism and Islamic fundamentalist values, and other dichotomies such as innocent/murderer, Christian/Muslim or civilian/soldier. Nonetheless, this intimacy and similarity between the victims and the performers remained. The embodied representation by the terrorist-performers meant that there was a physical intimacy in a macabre way. Not only did the terrorist performer share his final moments in a cramped train carriage with his victims but the bombs mixed their bodies together in a way that could not be completely

disentangled. A painful part of the aftermath involved making whole people out of the left over carnage.

This physical intimacy was also reflected in the fact that everyone who died that day died for the same reason and will be remembered for the same reason. Gill Hicks, a survivor of the Kings Cross bomb, made this connection of shared experience when she said of the terrorist performers “I view them as victims and that also helps me feel very sad for them” (BBCNews, 2005c; Hicks, 2005). Moreover, this physical intimacy and the proximity of the terrorists to their victims reflected the wider national intimacy and proximity felt once the identities of the terrorist performers were revealed as UK citizens.

Just as the identities of the victims of the performance emerged over time after the performance event itself so too did those of the terrorist performers. After the initial shock of the event, there were many theories about who was responsible but just over a week after the bombings, by 16 July 2005, police had confirmed the names of the four bombers and personal details of their lives (HouseOfCommons, 2006). As in the Blair/Brown case, these autobiographical details altered how the audience viewed the performance both at the time (as the ‘rivers of blood’ cartoon in Figure7.3 demonstrated) and in a historical context.

Three of the terrorist performers were quite similar.³¹ Khan, Tanweer and Hussain were second generation British citizens whose

³¹ All this information taken from the 2006 House of Commons report. (HouseOfCommons, 2006)

parents were of Pakistani origin and who had grown up in Beeston in Leeds. Khan, at 30, was the oldest and a teacher with talent for engaging younger students. He was a husband and father whose wife was four months pregnant at the time of the attacks. Tanweer was 22, religious throughout his life but did not show signs of being an extremist and had studied sport science at university. Hussain was 18 and had a weight problem throughout his life before losing 5 stone between 2003 and 2005. He was caught writing pro-Al Qaeda graffiti in an exercise book at school but otherwise did not seem extreme or out of the ordinary. Germaine Lindsay was something of an 'outsider' in that he was born in Jamaica but moved to Britain in his early childhood (HouseOfCommons, 2006: 17). After a complex family situation throughout his childhood and a conversion to Islam in 2000, he got married to a white British convert to Islam (who he met on a Stop the War march in 2002) and was also a father of a young child.

In some ways, then, the 7/7 performance was 'the ending' to a wider but invisible journey that constituted the lives of these men. After the 7/7 performance this invisible journey was made public. However, as the brief details outlined above show, from the outsider perspective there was no easy narrative, no defining feature, that explained the transformation from ordinary Muslim British citizen (or in Lindsay's case, naturalised British citizen) into villainous terrorist-performer. As the House of Commons report into the 7/7 bombings noted in 2006, "the backgrounds of the four men appear largely unexceptional. Little distinguishes their formative experiences from those of many others of the same generation, ethnic

origin and social background" (HouseOfCommons, 2006: 13). The newspaper coverage on 16 July 2005 echoed this sentiment at the time by putting personal pictures of the bombers as children or with their wives on their front covers.³² Again this highlights the embodied nature of political representation which in practice cannot be divorced from the person and their lives up until the point of generating the political representation. Like the Blair/Brown case, the narrative of the life of these political actors was a part of the representation.

As the characters of the 7/7 terrorist performers emerged, their representative claims as regards the nation became more transparent and stronger. As British citizens they represented subversive dimensions of the nation, people who were not happy with the status quo. The performance of their suicide was thus not only a rupture between the terrorist-performers and the audience of the live performance. It also marked the terrorist-performers' transformation from law-abiding citizens into religious martyrs.

7.2.4 Survivors

Just as important as the performance of death was the performance of violence that lived on in the bodies of the survivors. The survivors' making their way out from the underground tunnels was

³² For example, *The Independent*, 14 July 2005 and 16 July 2005, and *The Daily Express*, 16 July 2005

one of the first signs that anything out of the normal progression of everyday life was happening (Figure 7.2). It is estimated that over 700 people who were injured in the attacks survived (HouseOfCommons, 2006; Muir, 2007). In fact, a key character from the performance whose image came to symbolise the attacks in the following day's newspapers was a survivor being helped by a man with her face covered in a burns mask (Figure 7.4). Her name was Davinia Turrell and it was her image that came to represent the atrocity of the attacks rather than pictures of the dead bodies.



Figure 7.4The 'lady in the mask', an enduring image of the 7/7 performance. *Photo: The Guardian Website*

The survivors of the 7/7 terrorist attack made it visible almost immediately after the bombs exploded. Many of the 700 injured survivors flooded the streets completely transformed by the performance. There was a juxtaposition between the ordinary costumes that these survivor-performers were wearing, mostly the formal clothes of office workers in central London, and the visible

violence that they had suffered. The blood and soot, in particular, on people's clothes and faces was a highly visible sign that something had gone wrong. This matched their facial expressions of crying, panic, shock and fear that were out of the ordinary for so many people at the same time. In a way, this links into the idea of an embodied deliberation because, looking at their faces invoked a visceral reaction of empathy and a knowledge on the part of the audience that normality had been suspended. Faced with the performance of such suffering, in the moment of the performance it would be difficult to deliberate on purely rational grounds about the situation. The transformations of the survivor performers were more long lasting than those looked at in other cases in this thesis as many people suffered long term physical scars on their bodies. Like the wounded city, the transformations enacted on the performing bodies of the survivor performers were (and are) a constant reminder of the atrocity.

In addition to the physical presence of the survivors was their ability to actually tell their story of the performance and develop into rounded characters, unlike the dead victims and terrorist-performers who could no longer speak for themselves. In this way, because of their agency in performing the aftermath of the explosions the survivors might be considered performers as well. Their stories were often graphic about the violence enacted on their bodies. For example, Gill Hicks in a Radio 4 piece 101 days after the attacks described her injuries as follows: "It literally was like looking at an anatomy picture of the inside of the human body...Both my feet were almost surgically severed – so they were still hanging on to what

remained of my legs, but my legs were basically just two bones sticking out from some interesting mess above them" (Hicks, 2005).

Her shockingly frank account spoken in simple, metaphorical language allows the listener access to her position inside the tunnel, to put themselves in her body and imagine what it was like. Compared with the relative silence from the terrorist performers (outside of their martyrdom videos), the survivor performers continue to perform their roles long after the event and expand the performance script. This highlights a key theme in the survivors' account which was, simply, that of being alive. As Gill Hicks said in that same interview "I said to myself, 'I'm not going to die down here. This is not the end for me'" (Hicks, 2005). In some ways the survivors, by still being alive and engaging with the world, were able to continue their performances and also tell the stories of the dead as well. Moreover, they symbolised hope and represented the nation's resolve not to fall to the pressures of terrorism.

In addition to their stories, the survivor-performers took pictures and video of the tunnels (Figure 7.2) and provided evidence about the behaviour of the terrorist performers before the explosions. They had a dual role in the performance as both performers and as audience members of the live performance. This was crucial in making parts of the performance visible to those outside the immediate vicinity of the explosions. Their amateur remediation of the performance directly into the public sphere is reminiscent of the Faslane case and highlights the active role of the citizen in terms of interacting with, and constructing perceptions of, this performance. As audience members they made the performance visible by re-

presenting it in the public sphere from their perspective. In this way their remediations, their use of media technologies to generate their own mediated performances, countered the similar use of media technologies by the terrorist-performers in their martyrdom videos.

The idea of the survivor performers being representative in a political sense has been developed through their involvement in the 7/7 survivors organisations who gave evidence to the various parliamentary committees on the bombings. They also lobby the government for clarity on certain issues of the plot, specifically if the terrorist performers really were 'clean skins' with no previously suspected terrorist activities. Moreover, their stories have an ongoing life in the political sphere as although they have been awarded £11 million to date, the compensation for criminal injury claims continue to be processed (BBCNews, 2010). In some ways their involvement in the performance was a rupture between their old roles and the beginning of new ones. This was especially true for those with extensive injuries but also for every survivor performer whose future involved being an embodied representative of the 7/7 bombings atrocity.

In exploring the performance of death and violence in the 7/7 performance I have argued that it was "propaganda by the deed" (de Mesquita and Dickson, 2007) that highlighted the importance of action in this oppositional representation and deliberation. By sacrificing themselves and the bodies of other citizens the terrorist-performers suggested that words alone could not achieve their goals or were pointless without the performance of certain actions to lend them authenticity and legitimacy. However, this performance of

sacrifice had wider repercussions on the audience than just providing a compelling theatre of cruelty.

7.3. Generating Fear: terror and imagination

Reflecting on the idea that the words of the terrorist performers were 'given life' with their blood leads us to consider the wider goal and effect of this performance of visible death and violence in the public sphere. If, as Khan suggested, their words alone were not enough to attract attention and effect political change then it raises the question as to how this performance could do so. As the word terrorism suggests, in addition to performing the sacrifice and punishment of representative citizens and perhaps acting as a recruitment tool for other potential terrorists, the terrorist performance was a theatre of cruelty. It worked by forcibly showing its audience the horror of the death of innocents and generating a broader re-action of fear. As research on the instrumental efficacy of terrorist techniques has shown, fear has the potential to have powerful political after-effects (Wilkinson, 2001). In this case it hijacked and transformed the public sphere, where the audience's re-action in the days and months after the performance meant that this particular political representation shaped and moulded political 'reality' at the time and well beyond.

7.3.1 Horror: Designing the live performance for fear

The staging of the 7/7 performance was designed to generate a re-action of fear in its audience to the extent that, within the context of the metaphor of politics-as-performance, we might describe it as comfortably sitting within the genre of 'horror'. Nowhere was this

more resonant than in the advert for a horror film on the side of the Number 30 bus that exploded in Tavistock Square. It was difficult to decipher the name of the film because the top had been blown off the bus, you could only see the tagline which read, 'outright terror...bold and brilliant' followed by five stars. In all the transformations of space that the 7/7 performance enacted, (and probably unintentionally so by the terrorist-performers) this offered the most hauntingly ironic merging of the political and the cultural.

In fact, perhaps even more than the other cases in this thesis, this political performance resembled cultural representations in the public sphere not least because of the simple, emotion-driven message it was staged to convey. Unlike the narratives of Blair and Brown, for example, which were complex and centred on the inaccessible elite political world, the 7/7 performance had wider, more accessible themes and aims of revenge, sacrifice and its generation of fear. In this way it had much in common with dramatic narratives of a horror film. In what follows I shall draw out four themes that generated fear and added to this similarity.

The first is the theme of an invisible threat. The scripting of the 7/7 performance was done in secret by the performers, not visibly in the public sphere. To a large extent this scripting was invisible to the security services and yet it was planned for many months preceding the attack. So the threat was 'there' in the public sphere but it could not be seen. The terrorist-performers themselves were similarly invisible in that they were unexceptional, ordinary citizens. As such, the threat that their bodies represented was present in the public setting of the train stations and carriages but could not be identified

and so could not be stopped. The setting of three of the explosions underground continued with this theme. The damage caused by the explosions was not overtly visible and yet something terrible was happening beneath the streets. Finally, when the extent of the damage became clear, in the two or three days after the performance many people were 'missing' in that their bodies had not yet been found and identified. These people had disappeared and yet the threat of their deaths loomed large in the public consciousness (DailyMirror, 2005; DailyMail, 2005; TheIndependent, 2005).

The idea of an invisible threat in this performance generated a sense of insecurity because it shifted the audience's perspective onto the terrorists' political reality. Khan made this point in his martyrdom video when he said "soon you too will taste the reality of this situation" (Khan, 2005). After this performance the audience was forced to reassess its understanding of reality to include the terrorist performers and the presence of their threat in the lead up to the performance. Like the horror film where the 'threat' lurks in the dark before jumping out and killing his or her victim, this insecurity resonates for the audience out-with the actual performance event and makes them consider their daily actions with this threat in mind. An invisible threat encourages the audience to imagine it everywhere all the time and it puts the audience in a disempowered state. In this case the audience members, both live and remediated, were not able to interact equally with the performance because the terrorists knew what was about to happen but they did not.

A second theme in this horror performance was that of unexpectedness. The moment of a UK-centred terrorist attack was

expected, not only due to previous experience of IRA attacks on British cities but also as a result of British citizen Richard Reid's failed attempt to blow up an aircraft by concealing a bomb in his shoe in 2001 (BBCNews, 2001). It was also expected more generally as retaliation for standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the US over Afghanistan and Iraq and in relation to the experience of 9/11 as a perceived attack not just on the U.S but on 'Western' values. However, despite this intertextuality of previous performances, the particularities of this act of terror were not anticipated. The time and date, the victims, the number of deaths, the identities of the performers, the details of what happened and what will happen in the future were all unexpected and unknowns to the extent that they could only be determined many weeks after the performance event itself.

This unexpectedness led to a feeling of disempowerment and insecurity. After being shocked by the performance, the natural response is for the audience member to put him or herself on a heightened state of alert in expectation for similar attacks, rather like the false-start reaction one gets from a loud noise at a horror film. In fact, we might interpret the armed anti-terrorism squad's accidental killing of an innocent Brazilian man, Jean Charles de Menezes, at Stockwell Station on the London Underground just two weeks after the bombings as an example of this kind of re-active fear (BBCNews, 2005b).

A third theme in this performance was that of rupture. The explosions physically ruptured the environment, the bodies of the performers, the bodies of the victims and the surviving audience

members. During the performance there was also a sense in which reality and the normality of everyday life was ruptured by the presence of the survivors spilling out onto the streets, acting and looking like zombies in a horror film. The rupturing of a red London bus (an iconic symbol of Britishness that was even used in the closing ceremony of the Beijing Olympic games in 2008) was symbolic of the multicultural nation and the ruptured communities within it, not least Beeston where the terrorists grew up and lived. The performance also ruptured families and other important personal relationships, both those of the victims and those of the terrorist performers.

With such violent, transformative actions, the audience was left to wonder if the political reality after the performance would ever return to normal. This performance, unlike some horror narratives, did not offer a happy ending for anyone as even the terrorist-performers 'happy ending' of an afterlife is questionable. In the physical sense scars on the bodies of the survivor performers healed, albeit slowly, but these scars and those survivor performers were a constant reminder of the transformation. On the wider national scene, the healing of multicultural Britain was much more subtle and hard to define when compared with the powerfully visible rupture that the 7/7 performance made.

Finally, this performance featured the theme of the powerful villain. In controlling and staging this unexpected, invisible, rupturing threat the terrorist performers cast themselves in the role of an empowered Other to the audience. They were passionate masterminds who were able to enact their will on the population and

use their performance to cause massive transformations. Moreover, in their killing of innocent civilian citizens, they were easy to categorise as evil, religious fanatics like those villains in cultural performances – not quite normal and not quite human. This effect was highlighted by the fact that these terrorist-performers were able to speak from beyond the grave. Al Jazeera posted video performances of them speaking with no remorse or uncertainty over their actions six weeks (for Khan) and then a year (for Tanweer) after the event. The posting of the videos highlighted the wider powerful mega-villain that was the Al Qaeda organisation and the invisible threat that it posed on a continued basis (if the audience was to believe the terrorist-performers' claims in their martyrdom videos).

This idea of a powerful villain put the audience in the position of defensiveness, something that was encouraged by the tone of both martyrdom videos which were directed to 'you' the citizen and scripted in an adversarial tone of war. This performance generated a feeling of being under siege. However, it also allowed the members of the audience to cast themselves as heroic counter performers in a narrative of good against evil, something that is a common narrative throughout cultural performances and traced in the media reactions to the performance.

7.3.2 The imagined future performance...

This leads on to the role of the imagined future performance in generating a sense of fear for the audience. As I have implied above,

the imagination of the audience was used in their reception of the performance and their reassessment of political reality that it enacted. After the performance the audience could, for example, imagine this invisible threat growing as the performance date came closer. Also, by making the possibility of such an atrocity visible, the audience was able to imagine it happening again.

This fear was made tangible with the possible copycat bombing in London two weeks later on 21 July 2005.³³ Four bombers took three bombs aboard London underground trains and one on a bus and attempted to detonate them on a similar timing schedule with the underground bombs happening approximately one hour before the bus. Fortunately, the bombs failed to detonate properly and these terrorist-performers were subsequently arrested.

Whilst not successful in this instance, the idea of imagined future performances was expressed in sharp relief in both of the terrorist performers' martyrdom videos. As Shehzad Tanweer said in his video, this was "only the beginning of a string of attacks that will continue and become stronger" (Tanweer, 2006). Similarly, Khan said that "thousands like me" would be prepared to go to similar extremes for what they believed (Khan, 2005). The other material in the videos was also instructive and threatening. In Tanweer's video there was footage of explosions, a man circling London's Victoria Station on a map and armed warriors celebrating, apparently, the success of 7/7. Both featured Al Qaeda's second in command

³³ Although there was an assumption that these performers were from the same Al Qaeda cell as the 7/7 terrorist-performers. As such, these attacks would not be 'copycats' in the sense of being unrelated to the original crime.

Ayman al-Zawahri (although he does not appear with the performers) as well as the same background logo, reportedly a common backdrop in Al Qaeda affiliated videos (BBCNews, 2006b).

In fact, even the strategic release of chilling video material from Khan and Tanweer demonstrated that there were others who were complicit in generating and releasing the videos and who might do it again. However, whilst in these videos Al Qaeda claimed direct responsibility for the attack, it is important to note that many other groups wanted to claim the successful attack as their own because its very success was a powerful message of credibility for the group that organised it.

In styling the 7/7 performances as a precursor to imagined future performances, these video performances introduced an imagined future where the horrific attack happened again. Moreover, where the Faslane performers offered alternative utopias in their performance world, this performance offered the prospect of the UK liberal democracy becoming either a garrison state (where liberty is exchanged for security) or an Islamic fundamentalist state. As such, it was not just the act itself but the imagined atrocities surrounding it that gave the terror performance its symbolic and persuasive power (Strathern et al., 2005: 6-8).

7.3.3 Failure

The staging of this performance to generate fear and horror was not, however, entirely successful and controlled by the terrorist-

performers. This could be seen in the emerged plot of the explosion of the Number 30 bus by Hassib Hussein (HouseOfCommons, 2006; Murphy, 2006). Phone records show that at approximately 08.55 on 7 July Hussain tried to call the other terrorist performers but could not get through, in all likelihood because their bombs were either already detonated or they were en route underground with no reception. Then video footage tracked him going into the newsagent WH Smith at King's Cross Station where he bought a new battery, possibly for the detonator on the bomb. Then he went into a nearby McDonalds at 09.06, stayed for around 10 minutes before going to board the Number 30 bus, which he eventually exploded at 09.47 at Tavistock Square.

This highlights the uncertainty surrounding the performance because even at the time of writing four years later we do not know why there was this delay. The House of Commons Report suggested that either it was frustration at the late running that morning of the Northern line underground service which he was supposed to be on, or perhaps he needed a new battery for the detonator (2006). Or perhaps, he had some doubts about his future actions. In any case, the plan does not appear to have been enacted without incident.

In the case of the attempted bombings on 21 July the plan failed in a more dramatic way as none of the bombs exploded and the performers were subsequently imprisoned. In a later failed attack on Glasgow Airport in 2007 the terrorist performers managed to kill only themselves rather than any citizens, despite the presence of an explosion. These examples of failed performances, like the gaffes in SNPtv or the low turnout in the Faslane case, show that when

performances go wrong they can actually be more explanatory and revealing than those that do not. In the 21 July performance, for example, the failed explosions meant that the police were able to interrogate the terrorist performers, analyse the bomb technology they used, raid properties and seize vehicles as evidence.

These failures in performance also put the performance aspect, the fact that the terrorist performers were 'showing doing' and staging a performance for a reason, in shaper relief. That in some cases they were unable to do so proficiently made them less imposing, less of a threat and more human and manageable. In this way, a failed terrorist performance like the 21 July bombings was like a sinister version of the carnival seen in Faslane, subversive and revolutionary but with no permanent transformations and the audience was glad that it was over.

7.4 Counter performances; mediatizing spectacle

Until now I have discussed the staging of the 7/7 performance and the theme of fear and sacrifice that it was designed to generate. However, especially in the case of these terrorist performers, there was a clear separation between “dramatic intention and dramatic reception” (Alexander, 2004: 92) as there were many spect-actors waiting ‘off-stage’ to reinterpret the performance and offer counter performances of their own.

In his martyrdom video Khan acknowledged this point when he said, “I’m sure by now the media’s painted a suitable picture of me, this predictable propaganda machine will naturally try to put a spin on things to suit the government and to scare the masses into conforming to their power and wealth-obsessed agendas” (Khan, 2005). Whilst we might not agree with the sentiment of this statement, it shows that, like Blair in his resignation speech, Khan was reflexively aware that his live performance would not only be mediatized but also that there would be counter performances to discredit it from the media, the government and indeed the ‘masses’ themselves. Khan’s mediatization made before the event of the 7/7 performance was therefore an attempt to control these counter performances that would remediate his performance in a way that did not match his intentions.

The SNP and Faslane performances similarly featured alternative groups such as the Labour Party or Peninsula 24/7 offering countering political representations that aimed to discredit the

representative claims of the political actors. What makes this performance different is not only the immediacy of the counter performance but the scale of the actors involved in generating it. If the 7/7 performance hijacked and ruptured the public sphere by generating a theatre of cruelty spectacle that demanded an audience, it was matched by the scale of the efforts in the public sphere to regain control and normality. In this way, the 7/7 performance conformed to the idea that whilst terror is a “pervasive source of disorder, [it has] a very uneven impact on political stability and social order” (Crenshaw, 1983: 35).

7.4.1 Emergency response

The first and most obvious counter performance to the 7/7 bombings was the emergency response enacted by the police, ambulance teams and government. By 9.29am, after the initial confusion, the Metropolitan Police released a statement to confirm that there had been a ‘major incident’ in London. By 9.30 the Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms (COBR), which organises the central government response to any major incident, was activated and all the relevant central government departments and the Metropolitan Police had a meeting at 10.00am (chaired by the Home Secretary, Charles Clarke) to coordinate a response (2006; HouseOfCommons, 2006).

What was interesting about this performance was that because the moment of a terror attack in the UK was expected there were plans already in place. As the London Assembly Report of the 7 July

2005 Review Committee stated “undoubtedly the emergency plans put in place and exercised during the preceding months and years contributed to what was, in many respects, an outstanding response” (2006: 8). The counter performance of the emergency services was very much rehearsed before the event. Moreover, as the date of the bombings coincided with the G8 summit in Gleneagles, COBR was already in place at the time of the event so in effect the scene was already set for the counter performance.

Like the police at Faslane the counter performance of the emergency services offered the audience an alternative to the chaos and destruction of the terrorist performance with its invisible threat and unexpectedness. This counter performance was visible through the re-actions of the many actors involved, from ambulance workers and firefighters on the street to the publicised meetings of COBR. This visibility as well as the speed of the response served to highlight order and state control and reassert a coherent image of the nation.

In some ways, though, this was an expected part of the 7/7 performance rather than a freestanding counter performance (and indeed all of the counter performances discussed here could have been anticipated by the terrorist performers). The aesthetic effect of the counter performance was that the city of London appeared to be temporarily transformed into a war zone with army and police vehicles on the streets and heavy restrictions on access. This was symbolic of the wider effects that a terrorist attack has on a democratic state. It was the very freedoms of speech, action and movement that allowed the terrorist performers in this case to commit these atrocities. The terrorist attack and the subsequent anti-

terrorist measures by the state and security services thus echoed the balance between liberty and security in a democracy. For example, the subsequent anti-terrorism laws that were enacted in the years after the event, where elements of liberty and freedom of information were traded for increased security, lost the Labour Government credibility in some sections of the electorate. The performance of the terrorist attack thus undermined the state in a long-term way by pitching the human rights of liberty and security against each other and forcing the state to choose a route forwards for their counter performance. For the Labour Government actions like the attempted legislation to increase the amount of time a suspect could be detained without charge in 2008 (the '42-day vote'), on the Labour Government's agenda since 9/11, indicated the less deliberative route that they chose. This is interesting as it suggests that the non-deliberative approach of the terrorists elicits a non-deliberative response from government.

Coming back to the counter performance itself, the characters of the emergency service workers became, like the survivors, known and admired in the public sphere. They performed the role of heroes and rescuers for the audience, the counter measures to the powerful villains of the terrorist-performers. They were categorised as ordinary British citizens doing their jobs and healing the scars of the 7/7 performance both literally and metaphorically. In most survival stories they were described with admiration. This link between the return to state control and normality represented by the emergency response was highlighted by two onlookers watching the Aldgate station aftermath. They said "It looked like a very well rehearsed

operation. The police, fire services and ambulances seemed to be pulling together brilliantly. You got the sense that everyone knew what they were supposed to be doing. It was the worst possible situation but the fact that they didn't seem to be panicking filtered down onto the people on the street" (Jagasis, 2005). Here we see that the representative example set by the counter performance created a calmer situation in the audience.

7.4.2 Live audience and 'Londoners'

Another group involved in the immediate counter performance was the live audience and, more widely, 'Londoners' who lived, travelled and worked across the capital. Their actions in relation to the 7/7 performance not only cast them as heroes but also as vanguards of a more positive latent understanding of British identity that was not based on the ruptured one that the terrorist performer had envisaged. This could be seen clearly in the example of Davinia Turrell and her rescuer Paul Dadge (Figure 7.4). Dadge, a 28 year old former firefighter who was passing by when he saw Turrell and went to help her, said in interviews that "for me it was natural to help them. If someone is in trouble, that's what I do" (Akbar, 2005). This everyday sort of heroism was also mimicked by another survivor Ian who, when considering the passers-by who helped the survivors said in a Radio 4 interview, "what people did to save people and taking off their coats for people to use them as blankets and running to the shops to get people water – that was the best of humanity. ..there were people who were walking by who were

heroes in the everyday sense of the word” (BBCNews, 2005c). Their counter performance to the horror of the terrorist performance represented bravery against the attempt to frighten the audience.

This idea of bravely standing firm was reflected in the wider counter performance of Londoners in response to the bombings. Dudge, in that same interview, went on to describe that he was going to be using public transport to get to the Midlands the following day. He said that “there is a determination among people in this city to see this as nothing more than an inconvenience...we will not be daunted. My message to them [the terrorists] is ‘forget it, you will not win’” (Akbar, 2005). Similarly, the counter performance of people taking the underground to work the next day was an act of defiance as well as necessity. In newspapers on 9 July there were images of people on the Tube reading the papers from 8 July with images of the terrorist performance on the front pages (Figure 7.5). This communicated the link between the terrorist performance and their counter performance. As a commentator at the time said, it communicated the message that “London can take it. The British can take it” (Parsons, 2005). It also highlighted the many levels of remediation of the performance.



Figure 7.5 Commuters going to work on 8 July, reading about the terror attack on 7 July. Photo: *The Independent*

In addition to this performance of 'carrying on as normal', the Londoners performed counter performances in other ways such as the minute's silence to respect those who had died or leaving flowers at the stations of the explosions. One interesting example was a handwritten note placed at Tavistock Square that read, "yesterday we fled this great city but today we are walking back into an even greater, stronger city. The people who did this should know that they have failed. They have picked the wrong city to pick on. London will go on" (Davies, 2005). This note made the link between the counter performance and what it represented for the people who lived and worked in London. It is also interesting that the anonymous writer of this note attempted to continue a conversation with the terrorist performers even though they were dead. The counter performance was intended to be visible to any potential future terrorist performers. But it was also a live written response

which engaged in advance with the martyrdom videos of the terrorist performers, it was a pre-emptive attempt to deliberate.

7.4.3 The Media

The relationship between the media and a terrorist attack is fraught with difficulty. On the one hand the spectacle generated needs to be reported and analysed in the public sphere in a healthy deliberative democracy. But on the other, as Prime Minister Thatcher noted in relation to IRA terrorism, 'publicity is the oxygen of terrorism' because it needs to be seen to be feared. In the performance metaphor, the media gave the terrorist performers a bigger stage. Certainly in this case the horror of the performance was amplified by the UK media's representations of it. In particular the gruesome, gory stories about the injuries and experiences of survivor performers in the tunnels featuring panicked headlines such as 'We're going to die! We're going to die!' (Daily mirror 8th July 2005), 'THE MISSING' and 'Terror comes to London' (The Independent 8th July 2005) remediated the sense of fear in the live audience for the mediated one. This, of course, was probably the intent of the terrorist performers in their design of the live performance.

The media also set the performance in the context of a counter-performance, 'spinning' the 7/7 performance with their 'predictable propaganda machine' that Khan envisaged. Using similarly emotional tactics as the terrorist-performers in their counter representation of British national identity, many sections of the

media framed this performance in the context of 'the Blitz', with one paper even referring to the attacks as 'the London Terror Blitz' (The Daily Express). By linking the behaviour of the Londoners in World War Two to their reaction in 2005, the media generated a sense of continuity between the people, the place and their levels of courage and bravery. Moreover, this comparison categorised the terrorists as 'the enemy', with emotive language used to describe them such as 'cowards', 'bastards' or 'murderers'. Perhaps pertinently, in the Blitz comparison they were the metaphorical Nazis, who despite performing similar horrific atrocities on innocent citizens, eventually lost the war.

Another aspect of the media's counter performance was to undermine the legitimacy of the representative claims of the terrorist performers. There was little sympathy for their cause and indeed many outlets featured the story of Shahara Akther Islam prominently as a counter narrative to the terrorists' life stories. However, on the other hand, there were many stories about 'jihadists' or Iraqis celebrating the bombings.

This leads on to the fact that, in addition to the context-setting and commentary, in many ways the media were responsible for generating the plot of the terrorist performance. Whilst the terrorist-performers staged their performance in a particular way, the media played a key role in making it visible in the public sphere. They reported the smallest details of the timing of plot, the identities of the terrorists and the survivors and printed the autobiographies of those who had died. Whilst in the immediate aftermath of the performance these were not accurate (such as the headlines of '75

people killed' or the rumours of 'the 5th bomber'), the media was nonetheless an important source of 'what happened' for audiences, alongside the evidence collected by the security services. This was reflected by the attention devoted to the terrorist-performers not just on the 7 July 2005 but also over the coming days and months as plot detail and video footage of their movements on the day of the attacks emerged. Moreover, the UK media remediated the terrorist performers' martyrdom videos extensively, although it should be noted that the media coverage of the second martyrdom tape, released the day before the anniversary of the bombings was more muted and centred on criticism of that particular release date.

Finally, another interesting feature of the media's counter performance was its international perspective. For example, on 10 July The Independent used a whole page to remediate images of the reactions of other newspapers throughout the Western world and keenly highlighted that people of many different nations, not just Britain, were affected by the attacks. This was reinforced by the page of photos with details of the victims' nationalities in the Daily Express on the 10th July suggested. So, this 7/7 performance was contextualised both as a British national tragedy and as a global one by the UK media.

7.4.4 Conventional Actors

In addition to the media, emergency services and Londoners' counter performances, there was also that of the conventional political

representatives. Whilst the COBR plan was the government's institutional response, Tony Blair offered a more personal 'message to the nation' from Downing Street in the evening of 7 July after breaking off his engagements at the G8 meeting in Scotland. In this message he overtly tried to script the nation's counter performance. Using biblical language, he said "they [the terrorists] are trying to use the slaughter of innocent people to cow us, to frighten us...they should not and must not succeed. When they try to intimidate us, we will not be intimidated...We will show by our spirit and dignity and by a quiet and true strength that there is in the British people, that our values will long outlast theirs. The purpose of terrorism is just that, it is to terrorise people and we will not be terrorised" (Blair, 2005). Spoken with an emotional but grim tone and an ashen face, Blair's performance as national leader was well delivered and represented the national counter performance.

Individual statements of support for the UK by international leaders created further counter performances. Their tone, ecapsulated perhaps by the statement of the Mayor of Paris Bertrand Delanoe who said "right now, we are all Londoners" (quoted in Samuel, 2005) symbolised the terror attack as a wider assault on a "way of life" (Blair, 2005). This support was reinforced when Blair, in an act of defiance, returned quickly to the G8 meeting and, flanked by world leaders, delivered a statement that it was not only Britain but all major governments that would not be cowed by terrorism.

However, as an interesting aside, the government counter performance was sometimes conspicuous by its absence. In particular this was highlighted by the refusal of Downing Street to

respond to the second martyrdom video released to mark the anniversary of the bombings in response to the cynical timing of its release (BBCNews, 2006b).

In general, these counter performances demonstrated how the UK government used the international political stage to counter an internationally-motivated terror attack. The immediacy of these responses, that were remediated globally as exemplified by the Independent article on 10 July cited above, contrasted with the longer-term ongoing counter performances of the Londoners and the media that were expressed in the following days and weeks. The government's response thus added emotional punctuation to the terrorist performance by being performed on the same day and helped to shape the future counter performances of the Londoners and the media in the following days.

7.5 Conclusion: Performing Terror: Sacrifice, spectacle and hijacking the public sphere

Applying the metaphor of politics-as-performance to the performance of the 7/7 London Bombings in 2005 has highlighted that these unconventional political actors undertook “a particularly gruesome kind of symbolic action in a complex performative field” (Alexander, 2004: 88). Like the other cases explored in this thesis, the terrorist performers attempted to generate a political representation of themselves in the public sphere that was linked to their political goals and beliefs. Compared with the Blair/Brown case their performance offered an alternative conception of Britishness that was subversive and angry about the status quo. The terrorist-performers represented this minority and the techniques that people ‘like them’ would use to enact political change. In this way, unlike the other actors explored in this thesis, the goals of the terrorist performers were no longer overtly deliberative or supportive of the overarching state structures. In fact Mohammad Sidique Khan’s martyrdom video implied that they took such extreme measures of representation only because they were not well represented in the public sphere by their words alone.

This case thus reflected the theme of an embodied form of deliberation that I also explored in the Faslane case where the practice of deliberation was not just concerned with words and arguments but with symbolic action performed through discomfort, pain and, in this case, violence on the bodies of citizens. The theme of sacrifice in this case was put into sharp relief by the deaths not

only of the terrorist-performers for their political beliefs but innocent citizens whose involvement in the issue was contextualised by their representative relationship with the elite conventional political sphere. In this way, this case showed that political representation can be conceived of as a two-way process with the political actor representing the citizen but also the other way around. This back and forth of representation breaks down the boundaries between citizen and conventional representative by allowing a form of reverse-representation. It highlights the representative relationship between those elites and these unconventional political actors who choose an alternative, albeit dystopian, form of representation.

However, in this case I also argued that the aims of the terrorist performers were not just to punish and sacrifice the citizen audience but to generate a wider re-action of fear. In analysing how the performance was staged to create this effect I argued that this performance, more than others in this thesis, resembled cultural performances in its emotionally symbolic actions and plot. In this way, it fitted into the genre of horror, something that was bitterly highlighted by the ironically juxtaposed tagline from a horror film on the side of the exploded Number 30 bus and was further reflected in the themes of invisible threat, unexpectedness, rupture and powerful villainry. This similarity showed that political representations occur within the context of other representations in the public sphere and cannot be divorced from them, despite the rational demands of traditional deliberation. Watching the terror performance was like watching a horror film where they both resembled each other, rather than the horror resembling 'reality' or the audience's experience of

'horror' infecting their reception of this performance. The metaphor of politics-as-performance implies a more interactive relationship between these cultural forms based in the practice of making an event visible.

This case highlighted the importance of being visible in the public sphere before deliberation can occur. Like the Faslane performers, the terrorist-performers had no ready-made stage in the public sphere and so used dramatic techniques to create a spectacle that demanded attention. As Khan's video testimony implied, the performers were reflexively aware of the importance of creating a spectacle, one that would not only be experienced by the immediate spect-actors but watched by the mediatised audience. In this way, this case has shown that there is no clear defining line between the live and the mediatised political performance because the mediatised is in mind in considering the design of the live. Looking at the media coverage of the 7/7 performance and the attempt to recreate the immediacy of the live, we might argue that this process goes both ways.

Analysing the media and other counter performances for the 7/7 performances demonstrated that whilst the terrorist performance, by providing such a disruptive spectacle, was able to dominate the public sphere and effectively silence all other voices (some temporarily but sadly some permanently) it did not achieve this completely. Paradoxically, the accessibility of the performance in terms of the simple message, emotional pull, central location and relevance to the nation meant that it was one of the most interactive and participatory cases explored in this thesis. I argued that many

different actors in the public sphere were able (and indeed felt compelled) to offer counter performances to limit its effect. They used similarly emotional tactics to the terrorist-performers but instead of the desired re-action of fear, they performed bravery, defiance and courage. The audience, then, was not passive, powerless spectators to the performance, as to some extent they were in the case of the Blair/Brown case, but active spect-actors who continued the process of deliberation and political engagement despite the severe disruption this performance caused. This was evident long after the terrorist-performance itself. The subsequent public inquiries demonstrated that the link between representatives and citizens was not completely broken down by the terrorist performance as this form of conventional deliberation in the public sphere was the process to which the citizens returned after viewing the performance.

In this way, this case has shown that representations of politics are not accepted unquestioningly by the audience, as perhaps the sneer of politics-as-performance would suggest, but engaged with, critically appraised in terms of what the desired audience re-action would be and countered with performances that do not necessarily conform to the aims of the performers. Put together this exchange of representations creates a transformative, deliberative context in the public sphere. More generally, like Faslane, this case has shown that deliberation in the public sphere is not confined to the genteel settings of Parliament or public consultations. It can be experienced in big moments of national significance where ordinary citizens

connect directly to the political and create their own forms of representation in the public sphere.

Chapter 8:

The End: Concluding Politics-as-Performance

In this thesis I have presented a thick description of the metaphor of politics-as-performance by applying the frame of the metaphor to four empirical case studies. I combined the themes and techniques of performance analysis with that of participant-observation to explore how the conventional and unconventional political actors in question represented themselves in the public sphere. Conceptualising performance as a form of reflexive public practice, I analysed each case in terms of the staging, plot and actions and I also considered the participatory opportunities that were offered to the audience by each performance.

Analysing these political events in this way allowed me to explore the role, form and context of political information in the mediatised UK public sphere. Using the metaphor as a research tool has highlighted the lived experience of political representation and set it within the deliberative context of the relationship between the political performers and their spectators. In this chapter, in a manner befitting any 'grand finale', I invite all the performers back to the stage for a curtain call as I outline my main conclusions from the empirical research.

8.1 Final Bow: Conclusions from Politics-as-Performance

This thesis has featured many different political actors: Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, with their choruses of Labour Party audiences and scenes with other actors like The Queen and MPs in Parliament; Alex Salmond and Nicola Sturgeon, with their supporting cast of celebrities and citizens; The Faslane 365 performers including the protestors, the police and the local residents; and the large number of 7/7 performers, from Mohammad Siddique Khan, Shehzad Tanweer, Hasib Hussain and Germaine Lindsay to the survivors like Davinia Turrell or Gill Hicks and, sadly, the 52 victims like Shahara Akther Islam. In describing their actions in the four empirical cases we saw that some of these actors played roles for which they are well known in the public sphere and some, like Khan, made introductory performances that were nonetheless transformative and unforgettable.

In what follows I draw all the performances together and present my final conclusions of the thesis as a whole. I explore these under three overarching themes that were present in each case: performance and representation; performance analysis; and performed deliberation in the public sphere.

8.1.1 Political representation and performance; blurring conventionality

This thesis has highlighted the performative aspects of political representation and the importance of being seen to act in the public

sphere. In each case the political actors staged their own events in an attempt to become visible and control the nature of their representation. I have argued throughout that it was not just the conventional actors who engaged in political representation in their official capacity. The unconventional actors also sought to represent themselves and others directly in the public sphere. In so doing the four sets of political actors created political reality through their representations and added to the cacophony of voices that deliberate in the public sphere, both supportive and critical of the overarching structures of authority. Moreover, these representations acted as the basis for a performed deliberative democracy where the public sphere is constructed and transformed through a constant exchange of representations.

One theme developed by comparing these representations across the cases was that conventional political performers had more control than the unconventional political performers over how they appeared to their audiences.

In comparing their use of performance space I argued that the conventional performers of Blair, Brown and the SNP used space in an authoritative way that was symbolically resonant of their representative role at a national level. For Blair and Brown's handover day their presence in the authoritative spaces of the House of Commons, Number 10 and Buckingham Palace highlighted the authenticity and legitimacy of their leadership role for the UK nation. For the SNP, their travelling campaign show took their performance out of the confines of the capital city. This reflected their

commitment to national self-determination as well as their representative credentials as regards the Scottish nation in particular.

For the unconventional political actors, space was similarly used symbolically throughout their performances. However, more than the conventional political actors, the lack of an officially representative role for these performers meant that their performance spaces were sites of competition for legitimacy and representativeness. In the Faslane case, the protestors were at times physically removed from their performance space because their staging of the protest in that particular location caused a negative reaction from their live audience. The terrorist-performers used their performance space to make their message resonate on national and international levels. They forcibly took control of the space in a wholly unauthorised manner and in a way that ensured their dominance in the public sphere. Indeed, the more unconventional the performance, the more the performers sought visibility in the public sphere by gaining control of the performance space and transforming it through the destructive demands of their own performance.

My discussion of the empirical cases started with Tony Blair's return to the intimate setting of his Sedgefield constituency that reinforced the links between political representation, deliberation and territoriality. It ended with the terrorist attack which, according to the lead actor Mohammad Sidique Khan, was the result of the impossibility of deliberation and representation through traditional means. Both cases are concerned with the issue of '*terra*' or land/earth and highlight the link between performance spaces and

the issue of political representation of citizens. Each political actor thus employed a sort of territorial rhetoric in their performances by being seen to act in these spaces. In comparing their use of performance space, this thesis has highlighted the different sites for political representation in the public sphere. In addition to the traditional elite locations featured on the Blair/Brown handover day, other locations like Trimdon, Rosyth, the London Underground and Faslane nuclear base demonstrated that political representation is not limited to Parliament or the capital cities.

In addition to using their performative actions within particular locations to symbolise their representativeness, the political actors explored in this thesis also appealed to the performances of other actors in the public sphere. In the SNP and Faslane cases this was manifest in the prominent roles given to celebrity performers, not just from popular culture, like Sean Connery, but from business and political contexts as well, such as the MSPs at Faslane. In the Blair/Brown and 7/7 terrorist attack cases, the supporting cast of others took the form of 'ordinary citizens', for example, John Smeaton (in Brown's conference speech) or Gill Hicks (in the 7/7 terrorist attack). This demonstrated the various modes of political representation out-with the conventional politician. All four political actors attempted to use these unconventional political representatives in their own performances, even if in the Faslane and 7/7 cases, some of these actors were not themselves voluntarily performers.

However, the conventional actors enjoyed more control over the plot of their performances and by extension the cast of actors that

were involved. As such they were less challenged in their portrayal of their representative role in the public sphere. In the Blair/Brown case I argued that Blair and Brown's performance of certain scenes with other actors, like the Queen or the Labour Party conference attendees, actually legitimised their representative roles. Whilst this to some extent constrained the actions that the actors could take in their performances, it also meant that their representative claims were not challenged. The SNP performance, on the other hand, was challenged by other competing actors in the public sphere. In particular, the Labour Party and the media interrogated the SNP's representative claim and provided a counter narrative to its performance. However, because of the overarching re-action of the electoral mandate by the audience, the SNP's performance of their political representation of the Scottish nation was eventually authorised by the performance of winning.

The unconventional political actors offered an oppositional identity in the plot of their performances, suggesting that the conventional modes of representation did not sufficiently satisfy their political desires. This was particularly the case for the terrorist-performers whose dissatisfaction with elite representation was cited as a key reason for their performance. This oppositional identity, and alternative 'political reality' that the terrorist-performers represented in the public sphere, was quickly met with powerful counter-performances that undermined and questioned their representation. The Faslane 365 protestors suffered similar criticism of their representative claims, especially as it related to their performance space and their role as a minority. Counter

performances to this effect by the media, the police and the Peninsula 24/7 group undermined the Faslane protestors' performative aims and their staging of their political representation.

This highlights another theme present in all four cases, which is the re-presentation of political representation through contexts other than the live. All four cases featured an interesting relationship of remediation between the live and mediatised performances. This was particularly prevalent in the Faslane and 7/7 terrorist attack cases. Both Khan's martyrdom video and the Faslane 365 website reflexively acknowledged that the political actors' 'live' performances were generated with the mass mediatised performance in mind. Conversely, the mediatised performances were constructed with particular reference to the live, for example in the 'performer's-eye' view generated by citizens' accounts of the 7/7 bombings or protestors' videos of Faslane's Big Blockade.

As regards the conventional political actors, I noted a privileging of the immediacy of the live in the mediatised performances (for example, in the importance of political actors being seen to be present at certain locations, like Trimdon Labour Club or Prestonfield House). I also highlighted the importance of the mediatised in the live, through the screens remediating Brown's facial expressions at his conference speech or the SNP's use of mediating technologies to stay up to date with the campaign context.

Moreover, in response to the mass mediatised environment, many of the political actors explored in this thesis generated alternative avenues for the re-presentation of their performances.

Khan and Tanweer's martyrdom videos, SNPtv and the Faslane 365 website were all created with the specific purpose of managing the mass mediated response to the political actors' performances. In each case, the political actors authored alternative remediations that better suited their performative and representative goals.

This highlights the final theme concerning political representation and performance that this thesis has explored, which is the blurring of conventionality and unconventionality in political representative contexts. The metaphor of politics-as-performance, by looking at political representation as an aesthetic process of reflexive public practice, highlights the similarities between 'conventional' and 'unconventional' political actors. It reveals that there is much borrowing of the performative methods between political representatives across the public sphere, from the transformations of performance space to the use of alternative media outlets and the development of the plot.

Performing certain actions thus offered a mode of conventionality for the unconventional actors and vice versa. In the Faslane case this was highlighted by the high-production values of the protestor-generated videos and the self-publicising release of official press packs as well as by their association with conventional political actors such as the MSPs. Their use of performative techniques thus had an equalising effect whereby their performances could be considered alongside those of political elites regardless of the differences in official representativeness, organisation or funds.

In the conventional cases, performing certain actions made the political actors appear less conventional. It distanced them from the unpopular image of traditional political representation in Parliament and allowed them to perform a more intuitively representative role that engaged more directly with popular culture and to some extent mimicked the alternatives offered by the unconventional political performances. This was seen in the unusually friendly atmosphere of Blair's final PMQs and also in Blair and Brown's use of their personal autobiographies. In performing their autobiographies to the audience, each political actor portrayed himself as both The Man, a recognisable character in elite political representation, and the intuitively representative Everyman. In the SNP case this theme of unconventionality was reflected in Salmond's mimicry of Sean Connery's performance style, in the informality of Scotland's Big Party (notably Sturgeon's stint as an MC) and in the chattiness and accessibility of SNPtv.

Even in the 7/7 case, the aesthetic of the performance offered a bizarre sort of conventionality through its physical and organisational similarity to the now iconic '9/11' performance, and also the similarities to the recognisable genre of horror. Moreover, the terrorist-performers stated their desire to be viewed as representatives, even if their words had to be 'given life with their blood'. This demonstrated a desire for recognition as conventional representatives in the public sphere, a desire to be heard, to be taken seriously and to be empowered.

The overarching conclusion I draw from exploring the performative aspects of political representation is the importance of

'showing doing' in the public sphere. The need to attract a sympathetic audience leads to these different forms of political representation being remediated across conventional and unconventional performances. The political reality that is experienced by the citizen audience is to a large extent constructed by these performances, both live and mediatised. The critique of the inauthenticity of 'politics-as-performance' is therefore fundamentally misplaced. This thesis questions what the political 'reality' of the political speech, the election campaign, the protest or the terrorist attack is except that which is re-presented reflexively in the public sphere. The performances and counter-performances described in these cases were attempts by the political performers in question to stage their reality in ways that suited their purposes. This applies to Blair and Brown trying to script their autobiographies and that of the nation by demonstrating their representativeness, it applies to the Big Tent nationalist of the SNP performance and it applies to the alternative utopia offered by the Faslane protestors. However, it was perhaps most resonant in the extreme of the terrorist-performers who introduced their audience to their own, disturbing political reality of anger and violence that was made real by their performance of it. The horror of their political reality blew apart (quite literally) established concepts of representation and deliberation and temporarily destabilised the nation, both psychologically and in terms of civic understandings of representative political culture.

Throughout this thesis I have noted that these performances are not received unquestioningly by the audience or indeed other

political performers in the public sphere, but rather they are understood within a specific context and, in some cases, led to counter performances from these audience members. Political representation and aesthetic representation thus have much in common. They are both constructions of reality that can be judged in terms of their skill, quality and relationship to alternatives.

8.1.2 Performance analysis; describing the lived experience of politics

In this thesis I have not only sought to consider political representation through the lens of performance theory, I have also sought to describe it in the context of lived experience. Using the tools of performance analysis has allowed me to explore both political representation and the ways it relates to deliberation as it is practiced in the visible public sphere. From the perspective of the audience member I have described the processes of deliberation to consider how it feels to watch and participate as a citizen-spect-actor. In each case I have highlighted the lived experience of watching by analysing how the actions of the political performers look sound, smell, feel and resonate in the broader public sphere.

Using performance analysis in this way has demonstrated its potential use in the political sphere. It has allowed me to focus on these performances in a holistic context. Rather than just focusing on what was said, I have considered how the identity and setting of the speaker shaped their performance thus generating a more in-depth account of deliberation and how it appears in the public sphere.

Moreover, I have used the tools of performance analysis, from highlighting the importance of characterisation and performance space to the micro-performances of the facial expressions of actors. In this way I have described political representation in a structured and detailed manner.

In applying performance analysis to these four cases, I have highlighted those embodied aspects of politics that are often overlooked. In the Blair/Brown case I analysed the body work of Blair and Brown in their individual speeches and noted that their political styles were different not just in their words but in their delivery on a tonal and facial level. I showed how Salmond's performance style reflected to authoritative cultural forms, in particular the method of Sir Sean Connery's SNPtv delivery, and highlighted the heteronormative physicality expressed in campaign photographs with his deputy, Nicola Sturgeon. In both cases I noted the importance of their bodies actually inhabiting (and being seen, in the mediated performances, to inhabit) particular, symbolically resonant spaces like Parliament or Prestonfield House. This reflected the role of the performing political body as well as the interactive relationship between live and mediated performances.

In analysing the conventional political performers I also argued that their bodies were used in a much less physical, tactile manner than in the performances of the unconventional actors I explored. Their bodies were also protected from a tactile interaction with the audience to a greater extent, with many performances being staged in special performance spaces that reinforced the separateness of the audience and performers.

The unconventional cases, on the other hand, highlighted the importance of embodying resistance in representing an oppositional identity in the public sphere. In the Faslane case this involved the extreme tactics of blockading and locking-on but in the 7/7 terrorist attack this was taken to the extreme by the performance of the terrorist-performers' suicide. I argued that this embodied political action offered a different way of communicating with the citizen-audience that went beyond rational argument, a sort of embodied deliberation in the public sphere which was accessible in that it could be understood by all.

The cases differed in the experience for the audience and how their bodies were used in the performances. I noted that in the conventional cases the physical presence of the live audiences was an important feature in the performance and supported their representative claims. For the most part these audiences were present out of choice and for reasons associated with their professions or their political allegiance. This was not the case for the unconventional performances. The live audience at Faslane was, for some members, an enforced experience as a result of their unauthorised use of performance space. This theme was seen at its extreme in the terrorist case where the immediate audience was forcibly transformed by the performance into victim-props by enacting their deaths or survival. In particular, the scarred bodies of the survivors, echoing the scarred city and symbolic of the scarred nation, increased the impact and importance of the terrorist performance in the public sphere. Their scarred bodies also caused the performance to be re-lived by audiences in the public sphere as

these spectators, or their bereaved relatives, performed their pain, suffering and recovery at public memorials of the bombings.

Using the metaphor of politics-as-performance has also highlighted how the experience of politics can be similar to the experience of other cultural forms from the perspective of the audience. The reflective soliloquy of Blair, the circus of the election campaign with its twin themes of *paidia* and *ludus*, the carnival of resistance at Faslane and the horror of the 7/7 terrorist attack performance all reflect an interactive relationship between politics and popular culture. This thesis has shown that it is difficult, if not impossible, to disentangle that which is political from that which is cultural as they both occur within the context of representations that make up the public sphere. The key strength of the metaphor is that performance analysis offers tools for political scientists as audience members to watch, judge and describe this practice of aesthetic political representation in the public sphere. It allows us to appreciate that political representation, in conventional and unconventional forms, is a living art.

8.1.3 Performance and deliberation: multiple sites, multiple forms

Finally, in addition to enhancing our understandings of political representation, I have shown how the metaphor of politics-as-performance generates new interpretations of deliberation. Indeed, the thesis has highlighted where political representation and political deliberation meet, clash, and sometimes get reversed. Throughout

this thesis I have considered the political performances as possibilities for interactive participation on the part of the watching audience members, or as I have conceptualised them throughout, the spect-actors.

All four performances offered multiple sites for deliberation within their representational contexts. I noted the commitment of conventional political actors to dialogue with citizens out-with the confines of their officially representative role in parliament. As I suggested above, in doing this these political actors experimented with unconventionality and alternative forms of political representation. This commitment to deliberation was reflected in the script of Blair's Trimdon speech and Brown's conference speech. Both performers addressed their audience in a conversational tone and outlined the problems of the nation with the citizen in mind – for example, Blair apologised for where he had fallen short, Brown promised to listen. These statements moved beyond the rational deliberation of parliament. They were attempts to connect directly with citizens and interact with them on a personal, more equal level rather than simply performing an elite and abstracted representative role. Moreover, all the performances in the Blair/Brown case allowed a high level of access to members of the media. This ensured that their performance connected with the wider mediatised public sphere and were remediated to citizens out-with the context of the live.

Similarly, the SNP demonstrated its commitment to deliberation. Party leaders did this symbolically through their performances structured around the 'Big Tent' of civic nationalism and travelling

to interact with their audiences directly. In a more tangible sense the party attempted to connect with citizens through SNPtv and the opportunities this provided for audience participation through the submission of clips and comments. Their remediation of their performances was thus not only an attempt to author the representation of their representative role, as I suggested above. It was also an attempt to deliberate directly with their audience, a theme which was developed by the subsequent SNP government's National Conversation.

The unconventional actors presented a more complex performance of deliberation. As members of the wider citizen audience, the unconventional actors connected to the public sphere by representing themselves in the wider deliberative context out-with Parliament. In this way their representations engaged directly with the performances of conventional elites in the deliberative public sphere. Their success in inserting themselves into the public sphere reflects that there is an active and dynamic deliberative context in the UK and one that goes beyond the top-down model of official 'consultations'. As the 7/7 terrorist attack case demonstrated, deliberation and engagement in the public sphere can have big, emotional moments of national significance that are uncontrolled and involve a multiplicity of actors, from the top level of Prime Minister Tony Blair's response to the anonymous individual who left a letter for the terrorists on the street. The terrorist-performers' success in dominating this deliberative context, however, also showed that deliberation is vulnerable to disruption through extreme methods of representation. The wider conclusion that can be drawn

from this is that the dynamic between the exchange of representations in the public sphere affects the form of the deliberation possible.

This leads on to the fact that the unconventional performances provided multiple sites for deliberation. The live performances were inclusive in their access for audience members. Unlike the Blair/Brown speeches and some aspects of the SNP campaign, attending these performances did not require tickets or personal connections to the key actors. In the Faslane case this generated a highly deliberative space where citizens could, and in the case of Peninsula 24/7 did, physically converse and deliberate the pros and cons of the political action taking place. In the 7/7 terrorist case, the performance of the explosions was accessible in so far as being a live audience member was a matter of bad luck (within the structuring context of the performance time). The wider performance in the aftermath of the actual bombings, however, was highly accessible to the ordinary citizen audience not least because it took place in the middle of a busy capital city.

The unconventional actors, similar to the SNP, generated sites for deliberation through their mediatised performances. The Faslane performers created their website and other mediatised performances that they uploaded to popular video-sharing sites. At these sites, again similar to SNPtV, audience members could question and respond through online comments or direct participation by adding personal videos. In the 7/7 terrorist attack case, Khan and Tanweer's respective martyrdom videos allowed the political actors to speak directly to their audiences and tried thereby to provide a pre-emptive

response to the outpouring of questions and anger that was counter-performed in the deliberative context generated after their performance.

In this way there was a tension between the performative aims of all the performers discussed in this thesis (where their performances were an attempt to stage their political representation in the public sphere), and the overall deliberative outcome. This was clear in the Blair/ Brown and SNP cases in the way that their attempts to speak directly to the citizen contrasted with their limiting of the live audience in terms of numbers, identity and the possibilities for audience participation. In the Faslane case this tension was exemplified by the protesters activity of blockading. Whilst it gained them a higher profile in the public sphere it was done at the expense of an equally respectful conversation with the local residents. In the 7/7 terror case the tension was encapsulated by Khan's assertion that his words 'were given life with [his] blood'. He claimed that his performative action was necessary to insert himself into the public sphere and for his words to be heard. However, in performing those actions to achieve this level of representation he actually sacrificed the possibility of his own engagement in such deliberation.

Finally, the four empirical cases in this thesis all highlight the limits of deliberative democracy in focusing on spoken discourse performed in a live setting like Parliament. As the examples above demonstrate, there are many sites for deliberation in the public sphere and the form that deliberation takes within each differs according to the context. In addition to the importance of digital

deliberation, this thesis has expanded on the concept of embodied deliberation.

I highlighted that reflexively performed bodily actions were used to enhance the spoken word. This sort of body work was a feature in all the cases. It was resonant, for example, in Blair's mobile eyebrows or in Sturgeon's tactility with Salmond. It was also present in the Faslane protestors' singing carnival songs and the physical performances of survivors in describing the aftermath of the 7/7 explosions. However, in exploring the different roles that morality and physical sacrifice played in each of the performers' representation of themselves in the public sphere, in this thesis I also traced another silent form of deliberation, one to which the spoken word was a planned post-script. This was manifest in the Faslane protestors who used their bodies to get themselves arrested and physically perform their resistance through the vulnerability of their bodies. It was also essential in the 7/7 terrorist attack case where the performative enactment of the terrorist-performers' suicides preceded their performance of spoken words, both literally and metaphorically. In this way, both the Faslane and 7/7 performers used their bodies as free-standing sites for deliberation within the public sphere out-with the confines of using the spoken word.

The metaphor of politics-as-performance thus makes a significant contribution to understandings of deliberative democracy. Whilst in these particular instances this silent deliberation limited the possibility for deliberation as it is conventionally understood, perhaps there are more purposive ways in which this performed deliberation could lead to a more thoughtful form of politics based

on a phenomenological interaction between performer and spectator.

In conclusion, looking at the metaphor of politics-as-performance has highlighted and described the process of deliberation in the public sphere. I argued that the form that this deliberation took was not only discursive but visual, embodied and digital. In this way, this thesis has shown in sharp relief that deliberation as a practice goes beyond the rational deliberations of Parliament or the genteel arguments in public consultations. It is an exchange of representation that encompasses the wide range of activities in the public sphere that both political elites and individual citizens use to connect to the political and argue about ends. The metaphor of politics-as-performance thus offered a more textured analysis of deliberation than 'lies' versus 'truths', or rational versus irrational arguments, and one that incorporates the participation of the citizen-audience and a way of empowering non-elites.

However, it also highlighted the inequalities in the public sphere as to whose voices are represented by the mass mediated public sphere and how unconventional political actors did not necessarily start from an equal position in providing a competing form of political representation. Whilst the political actors in question offered alternative sites for deliberation to counter this, the metaphor of politics-as-performance demonstrated the tension between the requirements of successful representation and the possibilities for deliberation.

8.2 Future Directions for Research

As an exploratory study, this thesis provides a platform for many possibilities for future research. The area between the disciplines of Political Science and Performance Studies is one that requires development in order to understand fully the wealth of ideas and analytical techniques of Performance Studies and their applicability to the political sphere. In this thesis I have offered one reading of politics-as-performance by applying the metaphor to a breadth of case studies and engaged with some key literatures within Performance Studies. Due to the confines of space, however, this study has not been comprehensive in comparing all the interdisciplinary linkages and has highlighted, for me, the potential of analysing the cultural in the political as well as the other way around. There are two strands of directions for future research; theoretical and empirical.

The epistemological assumptions and subsequent methodological strategies showcased in this thesis suggest that it has a place within the growing area of interpretive Political Science. I have argued that metaphor is a powerful analytical tool to access inter-subjective knowledge and have shown that an interpretive approach to Political Science offers a refreshing, situated way of understanding the political. In addition to prompting further research on this particular metaphor of politics-as-performance, I hope that this thesis inspires the research of other organisational metaphors within politics and the development of interdisciplinary linkages more generally.

Another theoretical area for future research that would be particularly rewarding is to apply Peggy Phelan's concept of performance as a form of disappearance to the political sphere. Considering in detail the privileging of the live in politics and exploring the role of memory, disappearance and what aspects of politics, if any, are irreducible and beyond representation would be a very interesting research project. Perhaps it would be especially resonant in connection with the practice of policymaking by describing, for example, the acts of disappearance in the process of generating policy documents.

From a more empirical perspective, the recent UK election campaign in 2010 and indeed the creation of the subsequent coalition government have generated a very pertinent political landscape as regards the metaphor of politics-as-performance. The staging of televised leadership debates in particular would benefit from a performance analytic approach as this phenomenon provides a natural continuation of the controlled staging I tracked in this thesis and would as such provide a fascinating follow up case study.

Moreover, in the process of forming the coalition government, the mediatised audience became transfixed in their spectatorship role. The nation watched as the normal election rituals of the leadership handover destabilised and eventually broke down through the multiple performances and counter performances being staged by competing political actors in those 5 days before Prime Minister David Cameron and his Deputy Nick Clegg performed their intention to form a coalition government in public. Using

performance analysis to understand this process and how it was remediated would provide an engaging study.

Linked to this, developing the metaphor of politics-as-performance using an international perspective would be another direction for future research. It would be particularly interesting to focus in detail on the national particularities of performance styles (outside, for example, Western traditions of performance) and link them to the performance style of corresponding political actors.

8.3 The end: concluding comments

In this thesis I have described the political sphere as a performance and in doing so explored a political reality that is generated through acts of representation and deliberation in the public sphere. Reflecting on the experience of this research, this public sphere is complex and occasionally bewildering in its interconnections. Even the small part of it that I have explored in my analysis of four case studies has showcased this complexity. Looking across the cases we see that they all refer to each other – Blair and Brown’s speeches referred to the 7/7 Bombings, the 7/7 performance featured a counter performance from Blair himself, Blair is also a villain in both the SNP campaign and Faslane protest, the SNP leader Alex Salmond supported Faslane 365, one of the 7/7 bombers met his wife on a Stop the War march, and this same Stop the War organisation was represented at Faslane. This level of interconnectedness and complexity was not an intentional part of the research design, but a result of taking a snap-shot of late ‘noughties’ contemporary politics.

The metaphor of politics-as-performance has given us an intuitively appealing way of navigating these events that focuses on the experience of being an audience-member to the ongoing and bewildering show that is 'Politics' in the public sphere. I hope that I have shown that the metaphor of politics-as-performance is thus more interesting and important than simply 'showbiz for ugly people'. Politics should not be considered the boring and staid partner to culture. This thesis argues that it can have big moments of representation and deliberation where we as citizen spect-actors feel excited, transfixed, engaged and empowered. It is appropriate to end this thesis where I started and reflect on my question of President Obama's inauguration performance. Even if it was 'just a show', for the audience it was un-missable.

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Appendix I: Patrice Pavis's Questionnaire for Performance Analysis

Source: Pavis, P. 2003. Performance Analysis. Michigan: Michigan
University Press. pp 37-40

This questionnaire was used in the research process for generating performance notations of each performance.

1. General characteristics of the mise-en-scene
 - a. What holds the elements of the performance together?
(relationship between systems of staging)
 - b. Coherence or incoherence of the mise-en-scene: on what is it based?
 - c. Place of the mise-en-scene in the cultural and aesthetic context
 - d. What is it that disturbs you in this production? Which moments are strong, weak or boring? How is it placed in the current production?
2. Scenography
 - a. Spatial forms: urban, architectural, scenic, gestural, etc.
 - b. Relationship between audience space and acting space
 - c. Principles of structuring/organising space
 1. Dramaturgical function of the stage space and its occupation
 2. Relationship between onstage and offstage
 3. Connections between the space utilized and the fiction of the staged dramatic text
 4. Relationship between what is shown and what is concealed
 5. How does the scenography evolve? To what do its transformations correspond?
 - d. Systems of colors, forms, materials: their connotations
3. Lighting system

Nature, connections to the fiction, performance, the actor.

Effects on the reception of the performance

4. Objects

Nature, function, material, relationship to the space and the body, system of their usage

5. Costumes, makeups, masks

Function, system, relationship to the body

6. Actors' performances

- a. Physical description of the actors (bodily movements, facial expression, makeup); changes in their experience
- b. Assumed kinaesthesia of actors, induced kinaesthesia of observers
- c. Construction of character: actor/role relationship
- d. Relationship between the actor and the group: movement, ensemble relationships, trajectories
- e. Relationship between text and body
- f. Voice: qualities, effects produced, relations to diction and song
- g. Status of the performer: past, professional situation, etc.

7. Function of music, noise, silence

- a. Nature and characteristics: relationship to plot, diction
- b. At what moments does it intervene? Repercussions for the rest of the performance

8. Rhythm of the performance

- a. Rhythm of various signifying systems (exchanges of dialogue, lighting, costumes, systems of gesture).
Connection between real duration and lived duration.
- b. The overall rhythm of the performance: continuous or discontinuous rhythm, changes of system, connection with the mise-en-scene

9. Reading the plot through the mise-en-scene

- a. What story is being told? Summarize it. Does the mise-en-scene recount the same story as the text?

- b. What dramaturgical choices? Coherence or incoherence of reading?
 - c. What are the ambiguities in the text, and how are they clarified in the mise-en-scene?
 - d. How is the plot structured?
 - e. How is the plot constructed by actors and staging?
 - f. What genre is the dramatic text according to the mise-en-scene?
 - g. Other options possible for mise-en-scenes
10. The text in performance
- a. Choice of version for staging. What are the modifications?
 - b. Characteristics of the translation (where appropriate). Translation, adaption, rewriting or original writing?
 - c. Role given to the dramatic text in the mise-en-scene?
 - d. Relationships between text and image, between ear and eye
11. The Spectator
- a. Within what theatre institution does the production take place?
 - b. What expectations did you have of the performance (text, director, actors)?
 - c. What presuppositions are necessary to appreciate the performance?
 - d. How did the audience react?
 - e. Role of the spectator in the production of meaning. Does the performance encourage univocal or plural reading?
 - f. What images, scenes, themes caught your attention and remain with you?
 - g. How is the spectators attention manipulated by the mise-en-scene?
12. How to record (photograph or film) the performance? How to retain memories of it? What escapes notation?
13. What cannot be put into signs (semiotized)?
- a. What didn't make sense in your reading of the mise-en-scene?
 - b. What was not reducible to sign and meaning (and why)?

14. Final assessment

- a. Are there any particular problems that need examining?
- b. Any comments, further categories required for this production and for the questionnaire